# Dominant Cultural Narratives on Homelessness: The Association between Media and Attitudes and Beliefs on Homelessness in Honolulu

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**Abstract**

Research suggests that dominant cultural narratives, in part, perpetuated by the media, may influence attitudes and beliefs about social problems. In turn, these attitudes and "lay theories" that the public has about a social issue can affect the type of policies that they support to solve the problem. Unfortunately, few studies have directly assessed this relationship. It is important to understand these associations because dominant cultural narratives potentially can impact the level of stigma persons experiencing homelessness experience as well as the types of policies implemented to alleviate their struggles. This study combined exploratory narrative analysis and observational research design 1) to identify the dominant narrative(s) surrounding homelessness in Hawai‘i as perpetuated by the local media; 2) to analyze community members' exposure to and degree of endorsement of these dominant narratives among stakeholder groups; and 3) to assess the impact of these narratives on community members' attitudes, beliefs and policies endorsed. Results showed that negative media narratives were the most common narratives in local media coverage, and community members indicated the most exposure to and endorsement of these narratives. Exposure to negative media narratives also had the most impact on endorsed solutions to homelessness. In particular, negative media exposure predicted increased endorsement of basic services and individual-level solutions when mediated by beliefs that homelessness is caused by individual deficits. Exposure to media narratives also interacted with gender and previous contact with persons experiencing homelessness to impact community member attitudes. This work discusses these findings and their implications for research on media, homelessness, and public opinion as well as for local homeless policy and interventions aimed at reducing stigma.

## Table of Contents

## List of Tables

## List of Figures

## Chapter 1. Introduction

Research suggests that dominant cultural narratives, in part, perpetuated by the media, may influence attitudes and beliefs about social problems. In turn, these attitudes and "lay theories" that the public has about a social issue can affect the type of policies that they support to solve the problem. For example, research shows that the public tends to believe that homelessness is caused by structural issues, to have more positive attitudes toward persons experiencing homelessness, and to be willing to pay more money in taxes to alleviate the problem (Lee, Tyler, & Wright, 2010; Toro & McDonnell, 1992). Additionally, because policymakers often use the media to gauge public opinion, media-perpetuated narratives can also impact the types of policies actually implemented (Iyengar, 1991). Therefore, media-perpetuated dominant cultural narratives may have profound implications for vulnerable persons like individuals experiencing homelessness because these narratives can impact the level of stigma vulnerable persons experience at an interpersonal-level as well as the types of policies implemented to assist them.

Research on public attitudes toward and beliefs about “the homeless” suggests that these attitudes and beliefs are associated with media representations of homelessness that reflect similar beliefs and theories. However, few studies have directly assessed this relationship, instead drawing parallels between surveys on attitudes/beliefs and separate media content analyses. Additionally, most studies on public opinions about homelessness have been conducted at a national level, asking about “the homeless” in the abstract, disregarding local context and stakeholder power dynamics. This study addressed these limitations by directly examining the relationship between dominant cultural narratives about homelessness and attitudes and beliefs

about causes of and solutions to homelessness. It also examined how these narratives, attitudes, and beliefs varied across stakeholder groups within a local context.

This comprehensive mixed-methods investigation consisted of two consecutive studies, relying on exploratory and observational research designs. Study one was an exploratory study that used thematic narrative analysis of local media coverage to uncover dominant narratives on homelessness in Hawai‘i. Study two used an observational design to assess stakeholders' exposure to and endorsement of these local narratives as well as their attitudes, beliefs, and policy endorsements regarding homelessness in Honolulu. In particular, this study aimed 1) to identify the dominant narrative(s) surrounding homelessness in Hawai‘i as perpetuated by the local media; 2) to analyze community members' exposure to and degree of endorsement of these dominant narratives among stakeholder groups; and 3) to assess the impact of these narratives on community members' attitudes, beliefs and policies endorsed. Because one way that community psychologists can promote a more equitable society is by intervening in the types of messages and narratives people in communities receive, understanding the role of the media in shaping community members' attitudes and beliefs can inform multilevel interventions that seek to reduce stigma toward persons experiencing homelessness by producing healthier and more accurate narratives (Bond, 2016; Rappaport, 2000). Additionally, understanding community attitudes and beliefs about homelessness in their communities can inform local policy efforts.

## Chapter 2. Literature Review

This chapter first summarizes the somewhat limited literature on public attitudes toward and beliefs about homelessness, presenting it chronologically. Then, I discuss research connecting these public opinions with policy endorsement. Next, I present studies on media representations of "the homeless" and the few studies that attempt to link media representations and public opinions. I identify limitations and gaps throughout and end with a discussion on how the current study can address these gaps.

### Attitudes and Beliefs about "the Homeless"

Researchers began studying public attitudes toward and beliefs about people experiencing homelessness in the mid-1980s during the rise of the "new homeless." The "new homeless" refers to both the renewed research interest in homelessness and the rise in numbers of recorded unsheltered people in the 1980s (Shlay & Rossi, 1992). The "new homeless" also refers to a perceived shift in the demographics of the homeless population. In contrast to the "old homeless" of the Skid Row Era, primarily transient men who did not lead "normal" social lives, the "new homeless" were characterized by increased numbers of women, children, and minorities. Notably, this phenomenon was conceptualized as primarily a housing problem as opposed to an issue of social deviancy (Shlay & Rossi, 1992). "New homeless" researchers sought to understand how the public responded to this new phenomenon amid an overall depressed economic climate.

These early researchers assumed that public attitudes toward "the homeless" would mirror previous findings on public attitudes toward the poor, which were generally non-sympathetic and focused on individual-deficits, such as laziness or mental illness (Lee et al., 2010). Research on attitudes toward the poor showed that the public attributed poverty to

personal or moral failings (Feagin, 1975; Huber & Form, 1973; Kluegel & Smith, 1986; Nilson, 1981). Therefore, the "new homeless" researchers predicted that attitudes toward people experiencing homelessness would be even more antagonistic given that "the homeless" were a sub-group representing the most destitute members of "the poor" (Lee, Jones, & Lewis, 1990). However, early studies indicated that people were generally sympathetic toward people experiencing homelessness and that most people even would be willing to support tax-payer funded policies geared toward alleviating homelessness (Benedict, Shaw, and Rivlin,1988; Lee et al., 1990; Toro & McDonnell, 1992). Additionally, some research suggested that the public generally held nuanced views toward homelessness, recognizing that a myriad of factors contributed to the problem as opposed to only individual deficits (Lee et al., 1991). While these studies have been few, they are remarkably consistent in certain findings, particularly that the American public was overall sympathetic toward persons experiencing homelessness for much of the 1980s and 1990s.

One of the earliest studies by Benedict and colleagues (1988) found that overall attitudes toward "the homeless" were sympathetic. The study asked two groups of participants –New York City dwellers and New York City commuters—to indicate how sympathetic they were toward the homeless on a five-point scale from "very unsympathetic" to "very sympathetic." The New York City dwellers had higher mean ratings, suggesting greater sympathy. However, this difference was not significant, and both groups were more sympathetic than anticipated. Because the two groups of participants did not vary significantly in their attitudes toward people experiencing homelessness, the authors suggested that these sympathetic attitudes may persist across different populations of people. Notably, despite these sympathetic attitudes, both samples viewed the possible placement of a homeless shelter in their neighborhood unfavorably. The

authors concluded that general attitudes (toward "the homeless") were more sympathetic than specific attitudes (toward a homeless shelter in one's neighborhood).

Lee and colleagues (1990) added to this research by examining beliefs about the causes of homelessness, perceptions about persons experiencing homelessness and the problem's severity, and policy options *in addition* to examining attitudes toward the homeless. They surveyed residents in Nashville, Tennessee and found that the participants tended to espouse complex and nuanced beliefs about homelessness, recognizing that both structural and individual-level factors contributed to homelessness. In fact, ninety percent (90%) of the sample identified 51 different combinations of the available six causal factors (personal choice, work aversion, alcoholism, mental illness, bad luck, and structural forces). Interestingly, thirty-two percent (32%) of participants chose both an internal factor (e.g., "work aversion") *and* an external factor (e.g., "bad luck"). As Lee and colleagues (1990) noted: "[h]ighlighting the complexity of how people think about homelessness is the fact that 28.8% of all participants held at least four of the six causal beliefs simultaneously" (p. 257). Finally, in agreement with Benedict and colleagues (1988), Lee and colleagues argued that their study suggested that the public was generally sympathetic and believed homelessness was a serious problem to which the federal government should devote more resources. Ultimately, they concluded that the American public is generally more sympathetic toward "the homeless" than toward "the poor" and tends to attribute homelessness to structural causes more than individual personal failings.

On the heels of Lee and colleagues' (1990) study, Toro and McDonnell (1992) also reported that the public held positive beliefs about and attitudes toward the homeless. They examined beliefs, attitudes, and knowledge about the homeless in the Buffalo, New York metropolitan area. In this study, "knowledge" referred to participants' awareness of the "actual"

characteristics of homeless persons. Researchers found that participants were relatively accurate in this knowledge, which they argued suggested that the public was well-informed. The authors noted that the public did underestimate homeless persons' number of arrests and amount contact with family, while overestimating felony convictions and drug abuse. However, for the most part, participants were "reasonably accurate" in their judgments, which contradicts previous "notions that citizens in our nation hold many myths about homeless people" (p. 71).

Similar to the two previous studies, the majority of participants in Toro and McDonnell's (1992) study viewed homelessness as serious (92% in urban areas) and attributed it to structural issues rather than individual deficits (66%). Additionally, fifty-eight percent (58%) of participants were willing to pay more in taxes to address the issue. Interestingly, Toro and McDonnell (1992) found that many expected demographic variables, such as political views, income levels, and education, were *not* predictors of attitudes toward people experiencing homelessness. Only age and gender were predictors, such that women and younger participants were less likely to attribute causes to individual deficits and were more likely to perceive employment issues to be one of the biggest causes of homelessness. Overall, this study supported previous findings that people tend to view "the homeless" more positively than previous research on attitudes toward "the poor" would suggest.

Phelan, Link, Moore, and Stueve (1997) took a different approach, using a vignette experiment to assess if the public indeed had more positive attitudes toward and beliefs about "the homeless" than it did about the poor. In particular, they tested whether different levels of stigma were associated with poverty and homelessness. Five hundred forty-four randomly selected participants were randomly assigned to one of two conditions in which they read a vignette about a poor man named "Jim." In one condition, Jim was domiciled and in the other he

was described as "homeless." Participants were then asked a series of questions about Jim with regard to his personal characteristics and participants' beliefs about his actions in order to assess the impact of the "homeless" label on stigma. They operationalized stigma in terms of *social distance*, *dangerousness*, *blame*, and *support for economic aid*. This study represents an improvement in precision from previous studies because it allowed the researchers to directly compare attitudes toward "the poor" and attitudes toward "the homeless" and infer causation based on the "homeless" label. The study revealed that participants did respond with more stigma toward a person labeled "homeless" than a housed person – but only on the measure of social distance. The homeless label had no significant effect on blame, support for economic aid, or dangerousness. Nevertheless, researchers concluded that the label of homeless "engenders a degree of stigma over and above that attached to poverty" (p. 332).

Notably, Phelan and colleagues' (1997) study also revealed that participants reacted more positively to the subject (either homeless or poor) than theory would predict, which is line with previous research. For example, the overall means were positive on each measure. The authors suggested that this positive response may be due to the fact that the subject in the vignette was described in relatively positive terms and because people are more likely to respond sympathetically to an individual than to an abstract group. Regardless, findings from this experimental design suggest that attitudes toward people experiencing homelessness may be more complicated than previous work had suggested.

**Trends over time.** Unfortunately, this initial flurry of research did not continue into the late 1990s and early 2000s. This dearth of research may reflect reduced public interest in homelessness due to economic and social changes that shifted attention away from homelessness and toward other issues perceived to be more pressing (e.g., 9/11 and the "War on Terror").

Picking up on this research in 2006, Tompsett and colleagues assessed changes in attitudes and beliefs from 1993 to 2001. They found that these attitudes and beliefs toward the homeless had remained relatively stable throughout the 1990s with small but notable changes. For example, people remained relatively compassionate toward people experiencing homelessness even in times of economic prosperity, showing no evidence of "compassion fatigue." Interestingly, the 2001 participants were *more* likely to support interventions that targeted structural causes than the 1993 participants; however, they were *less* likely to point to economic factors as the causes of homelessness. Later participants also were more likely to recognize diverse characteristics of homeless people. One of the biggest differences between the samples was that 2001 participants (especially those interviewed after 9/11) rated homelessness as less important than other social issues like public education and national defense. In other words, in 2001, people seemed to view homelessness as less serious and less connected to economic factors but somewhat paradoxically, were more likely to support solutions targeted at the structural-level. This study suggests that attitudes toward and beliefs about the homeless can change over time in connection with certain socio-historical factors and suggests that the connection between attitudes, beliefs, and policy endorsement can be somewhat contradictory.

A 2007 Gallup Poll suggests that public opinion was beginning to shift in the mid-2000s. In line with Tompsett and colleagues (2006), the poll showed that most Americans believed homelessness had increased (58%), while also rating it as less important than other issues, such as the economic downturn and the "War on Terror." Notably, only 1% of participants mentioned homelessness as the country's most important issue. The poll also found that when asked to list primary causes of homelessness, the most commonly listed cause was "drug/alcohol abuse" (26%), followed by "mental disabilities" (21%), reflecting a noted shift to endorsement of

individual-level causes as opposed to structural-level causes. However, when asked about other major reasons, sixty-five (65%) of participants cited insufficient income as a possible factor, which could be seen as function of systemic-level issues. Perhaps most interesting, when asked what factors might cause them personally to be worried about becoming homeless, participants listed medical expenses (43%), job loss (38%), price of housing (33%), and death or divorce (26%). This discrepancy may reflect the fundamental attribution error – people's tendencies to attribute others' misfortunes to individual failings and their own misfortune to external factors (Ross & Nisbett, 1991). Regardless, taken together, this research suggests that attitudes toward persons experiencing homelessness and beliefs about homelessness are complicated and subject to change over time. Additionally, this finding that Americans were less likely than they were in 2001 to attribute homelessness to structural-level causes indicates a trend toward a belief in individual deficits.

Up until the late-2000s, most published research on attitudes and beliefs about homelessness had been conducted in the United States. In 2007, Toro and colleagues conducted a cross-national study to examine attitudes and beliefs about homelessness in the United States (US), the United Kingdom (UK), Italy, Belgium, and Germany. They found that participants in the US and the UK tended to express less compassion toward the homeless than participants in the other countries. In particular, the US participants were more likely to attribute homelessness to individual failings than participants from other countries. However, US participants revealed relatively accurate knowledge about characteristics of persons experiencing homelessness and were more likely than Belgian and Italian participants to report it to be a serious problem. Notably, the majority of all participants (69.8-86.8%) were willing to pay more taxes to address the problem. Another cross-national study of the US and Germany conducted by Tompsett and

colleagues in 2003 reported similar findings. They found that German participants tended to express more compassion toward the homeless and to attribute homelessness to economic factors rather than personal failings more than American participants. Toro and colleagues (2007) suggested a connection between the fact that the US and the UK have higher rates of homelessness and the fact that the US and UK have more negative views toward the homeless, and public policy. They argued that negative public attitudes may have led to less resources and policies devoted to addressing the problem, which, in turn, exacerbated the problem. However, causation cannot be inferred from this speculation. Thus, while the US studies may have found that the American public is generally sympathetic toward the homeless, cross-national studies have shown that Americans have less compassion and sympathy than their Western European counterparts.

A more recent study complicates things further, finding that Americans have negative attitudes toward the homeless regardless of self-reported sympathy. Phillips (2015) found that the vast majority of undergraduate participants in her study expressed compassion and support for people experiencing homelessness and a willingness to help by volunteering or donating money (83 %, $n = 96$). However, the majority also perceived the homeless to be lazy (57%, $n = 65$). As with previous studies, participants attributed causes of homelessness to both structural and individual factors: economic conditions (95%, $n = 109$), mental illness (90%, $n = 104$), drug abuse (97%, $n = 112$), and limited job availability (90%, $n = 104$), suggesting a nuanced understanding of the issue. However, the majority of participants also identified "not working hard enough to earn income" as a source of homelessness (59%, $n = 68$), suggesting a reliance on stereotypes. These findings demonstrate that people can simultaneously recognize the complexity of the issue and rely on stereotypes.

Like Phelan and colleagues (1997), Phillips assessed stigma through self-reported social distance, but she measured social distance toward a *formerly* homeless person. Unlike Phelan and colleagues, Phillips found that participants exhibited low levels of social distance toward formerly homeless individuals while simultaneously holding other stigmatizing views toward "the homeless." The lower levels of social distance may be due to the fact that she assessed social distance toward *formerly* homeless individuals rather than *currently* homeless persons. Perhaps people view someone who has "picked themselves up by their bootstraps" more favorable than someone who is still struggling with homelessness. Regardless, these findings suggest that people may feel generally compassionate and sympathetic but still harbor and express stigmatizing attitudes toward people experiencing homelessness.

**What predicts attitudes and beliefs?** Research shows that certain demographic characteristics may predict attitudes toward and beliefs about people experiencing homelessness. While some predictors have been inconsistent across studies, contact with people experiencing homelessness (Benedict et al., 1988; Knecht & Martinez, 2009), gender (Phillips, 2015; Toro & McDonnell, 1992), and age (Toro & McDonnell, 1992), have been shown consistently to predict attitudes and beliefs. For example, Toro and McDonnell (1992) found that women and younger participants were more likely to view homelessness as more serious and to consider it to be less of an individual-deficits issue and to view employment as a major cause. Additionally, Phillips (2015) showed that women were significantly less likely to desire social distance from a formerly homeless person than men. In addition to gender and age, previous contact with persons experiencing homelessness can predict attitudes. For example, Benedict and colleagues (1988) found that people who had contributed monetarily to persons experiencing homelessness had more favorable attitudes. Additionally, Knecht and Martinez (2009) found that having

interpersonal contact (e.g., through volunteering) with persons experiencing homelessness led people to be less likely to attribute homelessness causes to individual characteristics. A notable exception, Phillips (2015) did not find a significant difference in desire to maintain social distance between participants who had volunteered with persons experiencing homelessness and participants who had not volunteered. This finding, however, might be attributed to the overall low levels of social distance in this study. Importantly, none of these studies assessed the quality of that personal interaction. However, if contact can indeed lead to more favorable attitudes and less stigma, this finding could have profound implications given that the 2007 Gallup Poll found that 44% of American adult participants reported that they had provided shelter for a friend or relative who was experiencing homelessness.

While age, contact, and gender have been shown to predict attitudes and beliefs, other predictors have been less consistent. While some studies have found that education, race, and political views were predictors of attitudes, other studies have found no relationship. For example, some studies suggested that white, male conservatives were more likely to be less sympathetic and to believe that individual-level factors cause homelessness (Lee et al., 1991; Lee & Price-Spratlen, 2004; Lee et al., 2010). Noy (2009) found that conservatives also were more likely to endorse individual deficiencies and to outright deny structural causes. However, other studies have found no differences associated with political affiliation (Toro & McDonnell, 1992). Phelan, Link, Stueve, and Moore (1995) reported that education could lead to more tolerant attitudes but that it also could be associated with less support for economic assistance. Additionally, Toro and colleagues (2007) found that previous personal experience with homelessness can lead to increased awareness of homelessness and more compassion towards people experiencing homelessness. However, age, gender, and contact with persons experiencing

homelessness remain the only consistent predictors of attitudes and beliefs about homelessness across multiple studies.

Taken together this body of research reveals that attitudes toward and beliefs about "the homeless" are complex and at times contradictory, particularly when compared with literature on attitudes toward poverty more generally. People simultaneously feel more social distance from and more sympathy for "the homeless" than for "the poor." Additionally, people tend to support financial assistance for people experiencing homelessness more so than for the poor and are more willing to pay additional taxes to address the problem. Interestingly, this early research points to the conclusion that while people tend to attribute poverty in general to individual causes, they tend to attribute homelessness in general to structural causes. Given the connection between poverty and homelessness, this finding is quite surprising. Blasi (2000) suggested that this discrepancy might be in part due to racialized notions of poverty and homelessness. He argued that "the poor" may incite images of welfare recipients, which are often racialized, while "the homeless" may evoke images of predominantly older white men who are just "down on their luck."

Overall, research suggests that general attitudes toward people experiencing homelessness are positive and sympathetic. For the most part, Americans' knowledge about the homeless is accurate, and beliefs about the causes of homelessness are relatively nuanced and reflect a tendency to attribute homelessness to structural rather than individual-deficit causes. While people are generally willing to pay more in taxes and support federal programs to address the problem, support for local solutions are more inconclusive, and people experiencing homelessness are still highly stigmatized at an interpersonal level. Background characteristics such as gender and age have been consistent predictors of attitudes and beliefs. Personal contact

has also been a relatively consistent predictor; however, how "contact" is conceptualized varies distinctly by study. Interestingly, these attitudes and beliefs have remained relatively stable despite major political and economic changes over the past three decades. However, recent research suggests that these attitudes and beliefs may be shifting toward more negative perceptions of persons experiencing homelessness. Notable changes include the tendency to attribute homelessness to individual-deficits and to perceive the problem as less important (Gallup, 2007). Additional research is needed to examine changes in attitudes after the 2008 housing crisis and the Great Recession.

**Do attitudes and beliefs impact endorsed policies/solutions?** The research described here implies that beliefs, attitudes, and endorsement of policies or solutions are related, but exactly how they are related remains unclear. Research in political science, communications, and policy studies has found that public attitudes influence public policy decisions as well as are associated with people's proposed solutions to social problems (Bales, 2009; Iyengar, 1991). However, research studies investigating the connection between beliefs, attitudes, and policy with regard to homelessness are decidedly few and inconclusive. Some of the authors of the research reviewed thus far do *suggest* that people's beliefs about the causes of homelessness and attitudes toward people experiencing homelessness may be associated with endorsement of certain solutions to address the issue. For example, early "new homeless" research found evidence for the expected relationship: that people were sympathetic toward "the homeless," attributed the problem to structural-level causes, and were willing to pay more in taxes to support policies that would address the situation (Benedict et al., 1988; Lee et al., 2010). However, these studies neglected to directly test the relationship between these variables and revealed some unexpected findings and inconsistencies. For example, Benedict and Rivlin (1989) found that

even though participants were sympathetic toward "the homeless," most people were opposed to a shelter of any size in their own neighborhood. Later, Tompsett and colleagues (2006) found that while people tend to support policies that target the structural-level, they tend to be less likely to attribute homelessness to economic factors. Additionally, Knecht and Martinez (2009) found that while an intervention encouraging contact with persons experiencing homelessness changed attitudes, it did not change people's opinions on policy or solutions to homelessness. Therefore, the relationship between attitudes and beliefs about causes and solutions regarding homelessness is unclear, and research even suggests a disconnect between endorsed solutions, beliefs about, and attitudes toward persons experiencing homelessness.

**Limitations.** This inconsistency may be related to the difference between attitudes toward individuals and attitudes toward more abstract groups as well as between support for national policies and support for local solutions. This inconsistency also may be due to an additional variable – perhaps a larger ideology or cultural narrative – that frames a social problem in such a way that beliefs and attitudes seem incongruent with endorsed solutions. For instance, consider the "tough love" narrative, in which a punitive response to a deviant behavior reflects an attitude of love and comes from a belief that one is doing what is best for the person. Given that narratives reflect a certain ideology and can work to promote certain attitudes, beliefs, and policies, an understanding of narratives related to homelessness may help understand this discrepancy. While it is clear that most people agree that homelessness should be addressed, the way in which attitudes and beliefs impact beliefs about solutions and policy are unclear (Lee et al., 2010). This lack of understanding of the ways in which attitudes and beliefs are related to endorsed policy represents a major limitation in this area of research.

Another limitation in this area is that many of the studies reviewed here suggest a relationship between beliefs and attitudes without explicating that relationship. The assumption seems to be that belief in structural causes is associated with more supportive attitudes and endorsement of societal-level solutions. However, beliefs and attitudes do not necessarily correlate; thus, we cannot conclude that sympathetic attitudes, beliefs in structural causes, and endorsement of structural-level solutions are related without additional empirical research. In fact, some results suggested that an informed opinion on causes of homelessness might *not* predict attitudes or policy endorsement. For example, in Phelan and colleagues' (1997) study, the label "homeless" led to no variation in the participants blaming the man versus society (belief), but it did lead to higher ratings of dangerousness and social distance (attitudes). Another complication includes the fact that other beliefs a person holds might interact with beliefs about homelessness to produce different attitudes (and behaviors) toward persons experiencing homelessness. For example, religious beliefs about charity may lead to sympathetic attitudes and behaviors in spite of beliefs that blame the individual (this phenomenon might also explain the co-existence of stigma and sympathy). Additionally, some causes do not fit neatly into structural- or individual-level (e.g., unemployment). How are researchers to know if participants are thinking of unemployment as an individual-level cause or a structural-level cause? It may be fruitful to examine if certain combinations of perceived causes are related to different attitudes and endorsed policies. Regardless, it is important to be explicit about this relationship between attitudes and beliefs about causes and solutions when conducting this research.

Another glaring limitation with regard to this work is its scarcity. Indeed, the studies are few, and much of the existing research was conducted by the same handful of researchers. Of course, this fact does not diminish this work's value but merely highlights the fact that the area

has been explored only minimally. One way researchers may expound upon this research is by contextualizing the study of attitudes and beliefs about homelessness. These studies were often decontextualized, and they inquired about participants' attitudes and beliefs about "the homeless" and homelessness generally as opposed to inquiring about persons experiencing homelessness in participants' own neighborhoods. Phelan and colleagues' (1997) study is a notable exception in that it referred to a specific group member ("Jim") as opposed to a general group ("the homeless"). However, despite its specificity, this study was still decontextualized in that it referred to a specific but hypothetical person and not to homeless persons in the participants' own communities. Contextual factors, such as the prevalence and nature of homelessness in one's community, are absent. Surely, homelessness in the abstract and homelessness in one's backyard are quite different, and community members' stake in homelessness in their communities and homelessness in the abstract are different as well. Different contexts likely produce different perceptions of the same problem, which may lead to differing attitudes. Of course, that problem also likely manifests differently in different contexts. While national and international studies can be illuminating for broad trends, more research is needed to understand attitudes and beliefs about homelessness within a local context and in reference to that context. Understanding attitudes toward abstract issues and hypothetical people can only illuminate so much about the ways in which people feel and think about the people in their own communities – and the way those attitudes and beliefs impact policy and persons experiencing homelessness, both directly and indirectly.

Contextualizing homelessness also may help us understand inconsistencies related to beliefs about solutions or policy. At an abstract level, people may endorse certain policies to address homelessness but have different ideas when it comes to action in their own

communities. For example, a person may endorse housing policies (e.g., public housing) that assume a structural cause of homelessness, while simultaneously supporting a policy that assumes an individual-level cause in their own communities (e.g., a ban on lying down in public that *de facto* criminalizes homelessness). On the other hand, a person may not support social welfare policies but may endorse progressive housing programs, like Housing First, which assumes a structural-level cause of homelessness. The endorsement of this policy may be because of its perceived cost benefits. Indeed, many conservative leaders have endorsed Housing First because of its cost-savings (Padgett, Henwood, & Tsemberis, 2016). Thus, attributions of cause may not be predictive necessarily of the types of policies they will endorse.

Contextualizing homelessness can also help address the lack of attention to power and the ways in which it is dispersed unevenly in communities and the larger national context. While some studies noted the limitation of not considering within-group differences, they do not mention power and the ways in which it plays out among members of the community. While the majority of the public may have positive and supportive attitudes toward the homeless and support taxpayer funded policies, the voice of the majority does not necessarily win out in policy. Rather, people with more power have more influence. Thus, it is important to understand the attitudes, beliefs, and endorsed policies of both high and low-powered stakeholders. It is reasonable to assume that people's attitudes and beliefs vary based on the stake they have in the issue. For example, Benedict, Shaw, and Rivlin (1992) repeated the 1988 study with community board members and found that they also were sympathetic but were much more likely to support a small shelter in their neighborhoods than the 1988 participants. This difference likely reflects community members' knowledge about and previous work with homelessness. The current study examined differences between stakeholders, predicting that higher-powered stakeholders may be

less likely to support policies that align with their beliefs and attitudes if those policies may be particularly threatening to their stake in the issue. Therefore, power and stake may explain the inconsistencies between attitudes and beliefs.

Finally, much of this literature emphasized the surprisingly high levels of public sympathy. However, findings that people are generally sympathetic does not negate the vast amount of research showing that homeless persons experience interpersonal stigma as well discrimination at a systemic level (Baumgartner & Williams, 2014; Bukowski & Buetow, 2011; Goodman, Saxe, & Harvey, 1991; Pruitt et al., 2018). In other words, public sympathy does not translate to better treatment of and experiences by persons without homes. Again, contextualizing research could be useful. Ultimately, a better understanding of opinions toward homelessness in a local context is important because these beliefs and attitudes can be tied to policy endorsements as well as can be used to design interventions to help prepare communities for community integration of formerly homeless persons (Phillips, 2015).

**Media Impacts on Attitudes and Beliefs**

Aside from personal characteristics and experiences, what might cause these attitudes and beliefs? Early research was quick to point to parallels between sympathetic public opinions on homelessness and sympathetic media narratives on the issue (Blasi, 2000; Lee et al., 1991; Toro & McDonnell, 1992). Indeed, communications, social psychology, and political science research has a long history of showing that media impacts the ways in which people understand a problem (Bales, 2009), the importance they attach to that problem (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987/2010; Rogers & Dearing, 1987), and the causes they attribute to that problem (Iyengar, 1991) as well as influences what people consider to be problems in the first place (Cohen, 1963). This research has consisted of correlational, experimental, and quasi-experimental designs and has examined a

variety of media – print, television, photographs, and even comics. While correlational designs have pointed to the association between public attitudes and media coverage (Giles, 2010), experimental and quasi-experimental studies have been able to draw more causal inferences (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987/2010; Mutz & Soss, 1997).

One of the most influential research projects includes a series of empirical studies conducted by Iyengar and Kinder (1987/2010) in the 1980s that explicitly tested the causal link between televised news media and public opinions. Using an experimental design, they demonstrated that television news influences Americans' opinions through several processes: *agenda-setting*, *priming*, and *framing*. By emphasizing certain problems – *agenda-setting* – the media influences what people think are social problems, which can affect political judgments. For example, participants who viewed anywhere from one to six news segments about certain social issues were more likely than participants who watched news segments on other various issues to nominate that issue as one of the most important problems facing the nation (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987/2010). In other words, "*those problems that receive prominent attention on the national news become the problems the viewing public regards as the nation's most important*" (p. 16, emphasis theirs).

Additionally, media can impact public attitudes through *priming* – drawing attention to certain aspects of a topic at the expense of others (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987/2010). For example, participants who watched news stories that focused on national defense were more likely than participants in a control group to evaluate the president based on how well he handled defense. Another way media can influence public opinion is through *framing*, which refers to "the specific concepts and terms used to present choice or decision options" (Iyengar, 1990, p. 20). Because people have the cognitive capacity to attend to only a select number of aspects, framing

directs attention to particular aspects of a social issue. Two common media frames for political and social problems include *thematic* and *episodic* frames (Iyengar, 1990). Episodic frames include stories that focus on individuals, and thematic frames include stories that focus on the broader context. These frames can influence how people assign responsibility for that problem (Iyengar, 1990). For example, Iyengar (1990) found that public opinion regarding responsibility for poverty varies based on the way televised newscasts framed that problem. Whereas thematic frames led to beliefs of societal-level responsibility, episodic frames led to attributions of individual-level responsibility for poverty. These frames also influenced endorsed government policies to address the problem. Importantly, Iyengar and Kinder (1987/2010) demonstrated that public opinion was affected more by televised news than by real-world conditions. These experiments provide the most empirical evidence for the causal relationship between the media and public opinion through a variety of processes.

However, some research shows that this causal connection may not be as clear as these early findings suggest. For example, personal experience seems to play a role in the strength of the media's impact on a person's views about social and political problems (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987/2010). Not surprisingly, people tend to view problems that they personally face as important to the nation overall. Iyengar and Kinder (1987/2010) found that the impact of television news is the most powerful when it "corroborates personal experience, conferring social reinforcement and political legitimacy on the problems and struggles of ordinary life" (p. 114). Another complication emerges when media impacts are examined in the "real world." While experimental studies have shown media impacts on public opinion in a controlled environment, quasi-experimental studies have found that the relationship is more complicated in real-world settings. For example, some research has demonstrated that media has stronger

impacts on people's perceptions of the *collective* salience of a social issue than on the *personal* salience of an issue (McLeod, Becker, & Byrnes 1974; Mutz & Soss, 1997). For example, Mutz and Soss (1997) found that while print media coverage of a low-income housing had little impact on personal attitudes toward that issue, it had significant impact on people's perceptions of *others'* attitudes toward the issue. In other words, media coverage of the issue led to the perception that this issue was important to others in the community. This quasi-experimental study relied on a naturally-occurring example of explicit agenda-setting in which a newspaper intentionally increased its amount of coverage on low-income housing for a year. This naturally-occurring "treatment" allowed for researchers to compare this newspaper's readers' attitudes on low-income housing with another newspaper's readers' attitudes in the same area. This research also suggests that the impact of media on public opinion may be stronger for some types of attitudes or perceptions than others and may be moderated by other factors, such as personal experiences.

The finding that the media gives the appearance of representing public opinion on an issue is important because it can indirectly influence policy (Mutz & Soss, 1997). Given that politicians and business elites use the media as a proxy for public opinion, media can in fact influence policy indirectly (Protess et al., 1991). Additionally, this phenomenon, known as the "third-person effect" (Perloff, 1996), can lead people to attach more importance to the issue given their perception that it is an important problem to others in the community even if it does not affect them personally. Thus, media seems to impact public opinion on certain issues, even if it is less clear what sorts of opinions are most susceptible to media influence.

## Media Representations of Homelessness

Given the potential influence of media on opinion and policy, it is imperative for social scientists to examine media coverage of social issues like homelessness (Hodgetts & Chamberlain, 2013). Media analyses are even more important when working with marginalized groups because these groups are often misrepresented in the media and have little say in how they are portrayed (Gilens, 1996). Research on media representations of homelessness has spanned multiple media types and outlets. Overall, research has concentrated into investigations of trends in national-level media (Buck, Toro, & Ramos, 2004; Lee, et al., 2010; Lee et al., 1991; Shields, 2001) and in-depth analyses of local-level media (Best, 2010; Forte, 2002; Klodawsky, Farrell, & D'Aubry, 2002; Penner & Penner, 1994). These studies on national media representations examined changes in both content and number of media stories on homelessness over an extended time period. Researchers also have examined the content of that coverage, particularly as it related to characteristics of homeless persons, explanations/causes of homelessness, and proposed solutions to the problem. Additionally, studies have been concerned with whether or not the media was "sympathetic" toward the homeless. In this section, I discuss trends at the (predominantly US) national level and then turn to studies of local media coverage of homelessness before discussing limitations.

**National trends in media representations of homelessness.** A series of studies examined trends in US national media coverage in the 1980s (CMPA, 1989; Lee et al., 1991) and into the 1990s and early 2000s (Buck et al., 2004; Lee et al., 2010) in terms of content and number. Coverage of homelessness went from "an obscure media rarity in the early 1980s to a routine newscast narrative in the mid 1980s" (Shields, 2001). This coverage continued to increase throughout the 1980s (Buck et al., 2004; Lee et al., 1991; Reeves, 1999). Notably, the

term “homeless person” did not appear in *The New York Time Index* until 1981 and even then, only appeared five times that year (Campbell & Reeves, 1989). The shift from the occasional usage of “vagrancy” prior to 1981 to the term “homeless” likely reflected the increased public and professional awareness of the “new homeless” (Shlay & Rossi, 1992). This increase in the amount of national news media coverage of homelessness mirrored public opinion research findings of increases in public attention on homelessness over the latter part of the 1980s (Lee et al., 1991).

Homelessness coverage in national media outlets (including print and televised media) rose steadily throughout the 1980s, peaking in 1987-88 and then began to drop (Buck et al., 2004; Lee et al., 1991). In one of the most comprehensive studies, Buck, Toro, and Ramos (2004) examined media coverage of homelessness from 1974-2003 in four major national newspapers: the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *Los Angeles Times*, and the *Chicago Tribune* and found that the number of articles covering homelessness peaked in 1987 and declined through the late 1980s and 1990s, leveling off around 1996 through 2003. Despite the later decline, there was an increase in the complexity of the coverage during that time (Buck et al., 2004). In more recent years, the amount of national coverage has continued to decline, which some researchers have suggested is evidence for “compassion fatigue” (Lee et al., 2010; Pascale, 2005). In addition to identifying trends over time, research suggests that the amount of coverage varies annually by season, such that the media covers more stories on homelessness during the holiday season (Bunis, Yancik, & Snow, 1996). Despite initial increases in amount of coverage, coverage of homelessness has accounted for a very small percentage of overall news stories in US national news media (Lind & Danowski, 1999). Lind and Danowski (1999) examined the transcripts of network newscasts and radio on homelessness from 1993-1996 and found that

coverage of homelessness was rare and only made up about 0.0024% of all words. While coverage has waxed and waned, it seems that US national news media pays little attention to the homelessness issue comparatively.

***Sympathetic coverage.*** In addition to analyzing the amount of coverage, researchers have examined the content of that coverage. Most early studies found that US national media in the 1980s was primarily "sympathetic" toward the homeless (CMPA, 1989; Lee et al., 1991). In fact, Buck and colleagues (2004) found that national print media content spanning three decades was most sympathetic and positive between 1982 and 1987. While the amount of coverage declined into the early 2000s, Buck and colleagues (2004) argued that this coverage continued to be mostly positive. Notably, the content of coverage also seems to vary based on the season. Research suggests sympathetic coverage is more prevalent during the holiday season (Bunis, Yancik, & Snow, 1996; Shields, 2001; Snow & Anderson, 1993). However, Shields (2001) noted that these sympathetic stories tend to highlight "regular" people doing good deeds for "the homeless." In other words, increases in "do-gooder" or "savior" narratives meant that "individual efforts or acts of kindness were glorified to the near exclusion of other remedies" to the problem (Shields, 2001, p. 208). Therefore, Shields argued that these narratives were not really eliciting sympathy as much as they were showing "good people" doing good deeds. Overall, research suggests that media may be sympathetic while simultaneously reinforcing narratives of victimhood.

***Characteristics.*** Media analyses also have been interested in the characteristics of "the homeless" portrayed in media stories. Lee and colleagues' (1991) investigation of *New York Times* articles revealed an increase in the focus on families experiencing homelessness in the late 1980s in contrast to the focus on single adults in the early part of the decade (Lee et al., 1991).

This increase mirrored recorded increases in homeless families during the same time period (Shlay & Rossi, 1992). However, other studies of multiple print and televised media found that the majority of individuals experiencing homelessness depicted in these stories were single males (CMPA, 1989; Shields, 2001). For example, the Center for Media and Public Affairs (CMPA) found that most of the homeless depicted in the 1980s were white, adults, and single – the stereotypical "Skid Row" resident (CMPA, 1989). Shields (2001) examined national evening news broadcasts covering homelessness from 1980 through 1993 and also found that US televised media coverage of homelessness focused heavily on males and the mentally ill despite the rise in homeless families and the fact that mental illness affected a minority of the homeless at the time. That the homeless are typically depicted as single (often white) males is even more compelling given that other scholars have pointed to the rise in the number of minorities, women, and children as one of the reasons for increased media attention on homelessness (Shlay & Rossi, 1992). It appears that regardless of reasons for increased coverage, for the most part, media primarily relied on stereotypes in the 1980s and 1990s.

In addition to focusing primarily on stereotypes, national media focused on deviancy and individual deficits as causes of homelessness. Shields (2001) found that coverage tended to emphasize individual-level causes at the expense of socioeconomic factors. Most often, people experiencing homelessness were depicted as the "other" who threaten the rest of "us." On network news, causes were rarely discussed, and social deviancy was emphasized, which suggested to individual-level solutions. Shields concluded that "[w]hile the appearance is that the media are covering a social problem, they are really ignoring the social problem and focusing on individuals who are working to alleviate the problem through volunteer efforts" instead of focusing on structural level solutions (Shields, 2001, p. 209). In fact, mentions of deviancy

appeared to increase into the late 1980s, increasing from 35.7% to 48.2% of the sample *New York Times* articles (Lee, Link, & Toro (1991)

By the end of the 1980s, network television news had begun to treat "the homeless" as dangerous to themselves and others and presented homelessness as public safety issue caused by individual-deficits (Reeves, 1999). Persons experiencing homelessness were often stigmatized as mentally ill, substance abusers, criminal, "needy," and with contagious disease (Lind & Danowski, 1999). One of the most common characterizations of deviancy included mental illness (Lind & Danowski, 1999; Shields, 2001). For example, Campbell and Reeves (1989) examine network news coverage of the story of Joyce Brown, a homeless woman institutionalized against her will, and found that homelessness "often play[ed] out in the news as isolated personal problems demanding individual correction" (Campbell & Reeves, 1989). Importantly, characterization of homelessness as a function of mental illness serves an important function: "[i]t enables us to tell ourselves that the despair of homeless people bears no intimate connections to the privileged existence we enjoy" (Shields, 2001, p. 204). Unlike the majority of studies, the CMPA (1989) study found that deviancy was rarely mentioned. However, this finding maybe due to suspect methodology (see McNulty, 1992).

Unfortunately, this focus on deviancy persisted into the 2000s. For example, Truong (2012) examined media coverage of homelessness from 2005 to 2008 in newspapers from the top "meanest" US cities (*Los Angeles Times* ($n$ = 153), *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* ($n$ = 54), *Orlando Sentinel* ($n$ = 80)) as well as newspapers in two contrast ("nicer") cities (*Portland Oregonian* ($n$ = 56) and *Seattle Times* ($n$ = 59)). Across all cities, Truong found that people experiencing homelessness were stereotyped and described in terms of stigmatizing

characteristics and behaviors. This coverage associated people experiencing homelessness with mental illness, substance abuse, and criminal behavior, reinforcing narratives related to deviancy.

***Causal attributions.*** Perhaps due the focus on deviancy, print and televised media primarily referred to individual deficits more than structural causes (Buck et al., 2004; Campbell & Reeves, 1989; Pascale, 2005; Reeves, 1999; Shields, 2001; Whang & Min, 1999). Pascale (2005) examined articles in the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and *Los Angeles Times* from 1982-1996 and found that homelessness was "produced" as a consequence of individual deficits, and as such, homeless persons were attributed the responsibility for "pulling themselves up by their bootstraps." Interestingly, the longer people were in poverty, the more their poverty was attributed to personal characteristics. In describing people by their wealth status, Pascale concluded that "discursive practices regarding homelessness produce[d] the very conditions of alienation that they purport to describe" (2005, p. 263). Whang and Min (1999) found similar results in their examination of televised news segments on hostility toward the homeless from 1990 to 1995. They found that even in these cases, structural causes were omitted, and the narrative often became what the homeless were doing to others to provoke that hostility. In other words, persons experiencing homelessness were the perpetrators and society was the victim.

Interestingly some research does show an emphasis on structural causes in US national media. Lee and colleagues (1991) noted that "structural explanations los[t] ground in the late 1980s but remain[ed] dominant for the decade as a whole," (p. 673). This discrepancy may be due to the fact that Lee, Link, and Toro only examined one news source, the *New York Times*, which may be more ideologically inclined to focus on structural issues. However, Lind and Danowski (1999) also found that network newscasts and radio shows tended to focus on structural causes of homelessness more than individual-level causes. Interestingly, these studies

have found that most news coverage actually often does not refer explicitly to causes (Lee et al., 1991; Lind & Danowski, 1999). In fact, the proportion of *New York Times* articles that mentioned causes of homelessness at all declined over the latter part of the 1980s from 45% in 1980-3 to 23% in 1988-90 (Lee, Link, & Toro, 1991). However, while the media paid little attention to causes, when it did mention causes in later years, these causes were usually structural (Lind & Danowski 1999). For example, Truong (2012) found that the majority of print news articles from 2005 to 2008 did not refer to causes of homelessness, but when causes were mentioned, they were usually structural causes.

This discrepancy may be a function of the type of news story available for different types of media coverage. For example, Shields found that media tended to focus on individual deficits and that the majority of coverage could be classified as episodic as opposed to thematic. On the other hand, Truong (2012) found that media tended to focus on structural-level causes and used more thematic than episodic framing. Interestingly, Truong analyzed print media whereas Shields analyzed national news broadcasts. Episodic frames invite viewers to focus on individual deficits, while episodic frames usually privilege contextual elements (Shields, 2001). Perhaps print media is able to delve more into the complexities of homelessness through thematic frames whereas network news may be more pressed for brief and dynamic episodic stories.

***Solutions.*** Regardless of the discrepancies regarding whether media emphasizes individual or structural level causes, when solutions were discussed, they tended to focus on policies and programs designed to address homelessness, often emphasizing their inadequacy (CMPA, 1989; Lee et al., 1991). For example, approximately 88% *of New York Times* articles mentioned a policy, program, or service directed at the homeless problem, with 41% of articles focusing on its inadequacy (Lee et al., 1991). While the previous study only examined content

from the *New York Times*, the Center for Media and Public Affairs conducted a content analysis of homelessness stories covered by *Time*, *Newsweek*, *U.S. News and World Report*, and ABC, NBC, and CBS evening newscasts between November 1986 and February 1989. This study also showed that news coverage focused primarily on policies, programs and services designed to address homelessness, emphasizing the failure of these policies and programs to adequately deal with the problem. However other studies have shown that as opposed to emphasizing economic solutions, the media often implied that the solution to homelessness could be found through philanthropic efforts (Reeves, 1999) or was the responsibility of "the homeless" themselves (Shields, 2001). Thus, media representation of homelessness solutions – like its representation of causes – remains unclear.

**Media representations of homelessness beyond the US.** Analysis of national media coverage of homelessness in other countries have found similar results. Hodgetts, Cullen, and Radley (2005) examined the framing of people experiencing homelessness in UK television news segments from 1993 to 2002, and they found that homeless people were often categorized as "needy" victims in need of philanthropic efforts. While this representation could be seen as sympathetic, the authors argued that these characterizations maintained a stigmatizing approach that blamed individuals for their homeless situation. This "recovery plotline" emphasized the need for individual rehabilitation as a solution to homelessness. Additionally, they noted that persons experiencing homelessness were rarely given a voice in news coverage. They argued that instead "homeless people are encouraged to articulate lives that journalists think the public want to hear, and which are translated for public consumption by charity representatives and health professionals" (p. 44). The authors posited that these stories exist to alleviate the housed public's conscience by demonstrating that something was being done to help these "needy" victims.

Studies of media coverage in Canada and New Zealand have produced similar results. For example, Remillard (2012) examined 765 images related to homelessness in *The Calgary Herald*, *Toronto Star*, and *Vancouver Sun* from 2005 to 2009 and concluded that these images functioned to position people experiencing homelessness as the "undeserving poor" whose plight was caused by individual choice or deficiency as opposed structural-level factors. Similarly, Schneider, Chamberlain, & Hodgetts (2010) examined articles in four Canadian newspapers from 2007 to 2008 and found that while media stories often encouraged public sympathy, they also reinforced narratives that positioned people experiencing homelessness as threats to the social order. This framing highlighted the need for regulating persons experiencing homelessness. Mandeno (2015) found similar narratives in her analysis of 103 articles online news articles in Aotearoa (New Zealand) between 2013 and 2015. She found that these stories often silenced persons experiencing homelessness and presented homelessness as caused by individual deficits as opposed to structural-level factors. The researcher argued that these stories worked to produce a narrative of homelessness that supports neo-liberal ideology. Thus, these international studies tended to take a more critical lens and found that national news media emphasized individual deficits and individual-level solutions that ultimately supported a certain ideology.

**Local media representations of homelessness.** Similarly, local-level media analyses in the US and internationally have found more negative narratives compared to national-level media analyses (Forte, 2002). For example, Klodawsky and colleagues (2002) examined 79 items of coverage of homelessness in an Ottawa newspaper between 1994 and 1997. Findings showed that the media represented the homeless as primarily white male substance abusers—as the "other." Instead of representing persons experiencing homelessness as complex individuals

with various demographic backgrounds and pathways into homelessness, these complexities were downplayed. The authors noted that individual choice was overemphasized, and structural causes were deemphasized. When complexities were acknowledged, they were reserved only for the "deserving" homeless. Thus, coverage tended to be stereotypical and focused on individual deficits.

Best (2010) examined 475 newspaper articles on homelessness in Denver newspapers from 1998-2001 and found that these articles rarely presented homelessness as a social problem. Instead, that most homelessness coverage was episodic in nature, highlighting the individual level. Events such as high-profile crime, while increasing the amount of coverage of homelessness, led to episodic stories that neglected to treat homelessness as a social problem. On the other hand, coverage of "actor promoted events" (e.g., activities sponsored by advocates to address homelessness) was more likely to frame homelessness as a social problem. However, this type of coverage was rarer. She suggested that different types of events can impact coverage of social problems and challenges the assumption that increased coverage necessarily equates to more attention to the social problem of homelessness.

Penner and Penner (1994) examined 231 comic strips and 126 editorial cartoons depicting homelessness in San Francisco newspapers in between April 1989 and March 1992. Overall, forty-eight percent of the cartoons tended to neutralize homelessness by presenting it as an issue of individual-deficit or choice. Interestingly, the researchers found significant difference between editorial comics and cartoons; they found that editorial comics tended to publicize and politicize homelessness, while comic strips were more likely to neutralize the issue. They attempted to draw a connection to public attitudes, arguing that comic strips tend to reflect readers' attitudes while editorial cartoons, chosen by the newspaper editorial board, tended to

focus on awareness and action. Because "all but one of the strips are nationally syndicated" the researchers suggested that the attitudes reflected in the comics were "probably representative of U.S. public opinion" whereas the editorial comics likely reflected the opinions of the local community (p. 766). While connection remains untested, this study suggests a difference between national- and local-level media.

Forte (2002) used media analysis of a local newspaper's narratives on the homelessness to understand the community's recent closing of a homeless shelter. Taking a social constructionist approach, he found that the newspaper attempted to paint the homeless in a negative light in a way that justified the closure of the shelter. Importantly, Forte (2002) found that different stakeholder groups endorsed different narratives and social constructions of homelessness as well as different policies. This study's findings suggest that stakeholder membership may be related to endorsement of media-perpetuated dominant cultural narratives as well as might predict attitudes and policy endorsement more than dominant cultural narratives. Thus, the relationship between dominant cultural narratives, policy, and stakeholders might be more complex than previous research has shown.

Research connecting public opinion about the homeless with media representations of the homeless is rare, but some researchers have suggested this connection. For example, Blasi (2000) suggested that positive representation in the national media led to increased public sympathy and support for progressive policies, pointing to housing advocates' collaboration with the media to produce "sympathetic articles" that "highlighted the seriousness of the problem and gave voice to one view of its causes" (p. 207). Lee and colleagues (1992) pointed out that homelessness has been framed by public discourse as a structural problem, which parallels findings that the public views homelessness primarily as a structural problem (Lee et al., 1991). However, the

connection between the media and public attitudes has been inconclusive. For example, Buck, Toro, and Ramos (2004) argued that while it is possible that the sympathetic news coverage in the 1980s contributed to the sympathetic public attitude of the same time period, their findings demonstrated that media coverage and public opinions were no longer parallel into the late 1990s. Additionally, a more recent review by Lee and colleagues (2010) also pointed to a disconnect between public opinions and media representations of homelessness. Whereas media coverage of homelessness had declined (Buck et al., 2004), public opinion polls showed that people were still generally compassionate toward the homeless and considered it to be a serious problem (Link et al., 1995; Tompsett et al., 2004).

**Summary.** A series of studies over the past two decades have examined the trends in media coverage of homelessness. This body of work suggests that generally, US national-level media coverage has promoted sympathetic narratives regarding "the homeless" (Buck et al., 2004; Lee et al., 2010). Since the 1980s, the national media has portrayed "the homeless" as victims of structural challenges beyond their control (Lee et al., 2010). However, more recent work suggests that this sympathetic portrayal and emphasis on structural causes may be diminishing as some studies have reported an increase in individual-deficits narratives and narratives on disorder and destruction (Pascale, 2005; Shields, 2001). Local-level and international media studies have found similar results. Additionally, the amount of national coverage has declined, suggesting "compassion fatigue" (Lee et al., 2010; Pascale, 2005). While coverage has declined, national media coverage has become "more sophisticated," reflecting the complexity of homelessness (Buck et al., 2004, p. 165). In some ways, these findings do parallel public opinion research conducted around the same time.

**Limitations.** Notably, these studies on media representations of homelessness also have yielded somewhat inconsistent results. These inconsistencies may be due to different methodologies and units of analysis as findings seem to vary based on the method of analysis used, the theoretical approach, the type of media analyzed, and the level of analysis (local or national media). For example, studies that analyze national-level media have revealed more positive trends (e.g., Buck, Toro, & Ramos, 2004), while studies that analyze local media have revealed much less positive trends (e.g., Forte, 2002). Additionally, studies that took more of a critical or social constructionist approach tended to uncover more negative narratives (e.g., Pascale, 2005; Mandeno, 2015) than those that conducted content analysis from a grounded theory perspective (Lee, Link, & Toro, 1991). Therefore, it is difficult to determine if discrepancies are related to unit of analysis or methodology or if they reflect changes over time.

It is possible that actual differences exist between local media coverage and national media coverage of homelessness. Indeed, Schneider, Chamberlain, and Hodgetts (2010) found that differences exist between representations in a national Canadian newspaper and local newspapers as well as between the two local newspapers. Another limitation already eluded to is the research's focus on national-level media and homelessness in the abstract. Forte (2002) pointed out this limitation of research on attitudes and media representation of the homeless, arguing that often public opinions are elicited toward a hypothetical or abstract homeless person. Like public opinion surveys, media studies have also been abstract rather than focusing on a specific local controversial issue. Perhaps it is this limitation that has led to the discrepancy between findings of sympathetic public opinions and support of federal but not local policies. Surely, national media articles do not usually involve local controversies that have high stakes for people and their communities.

Additionally, research connecting public opinion about the homeless with media representations of the homeless suffers many of the same limitations of research on public opinions of homelessness in general. For example, the biggest limitation is its scarcity. Research *directly* connecting media representations to public attitudes is even less common. Often the connection is assumed or is not directly tested. Much more common is the analysis of media content in order to derive public attitudes. For example, Forte (2002) used media analysis to derive different attitudes toward the homeless, beliefs about its causes, and opinions toward the proposed solution as opposed to assessing the impact the media had on public attitudes. This technique is problematic in that it assumes the connection without empirically validating it. Other strategies have been to pair a media content analysis with a public opinion survey conducted at roughly the same time (e.g., Lee et al., 1991). Overall, this research has led to lingering questions: Has the media continued to be sympathetic to the plight of the homeless? Has it continued to attribute causes to structural issues? What is the impact of local media on these attitudes and opinions? This study seeks to address these questions and limitations.

**Next Steps**

The late 1980s and early 1990s saw an increase in the amount of research conducted to determine public attitudes and knowledge about homelessness as well as an attempt to connect these attitudes and beliefs to media representations of homelessness. Research over the past ten years has continued to examine media representations of homelessness but has focused less on attitudes/beliefs and the link between attitudes, beliefs, and media exposure. Overall, research has neglected to test this link. This study seeks to build upon the research trends of the 1990s and to explicitly examine the link between public opinions and media representations of homelessness. This study will recontextualize this work by examining local community

members' attitudes and beliefs and the impact of exposure to local news coverage of homelessness. Understanding this link is important because as Bond argued "addressing collective values, images, and narratives can contribute to social change" (2016: p. 264). Media provides an opportunity for such intervention.

## Chapter 3. Theoretical Orientation

This study relied on assumptions of narrative inquiry and community psychology principles to address questions related to media, attitudes and beliefs related to homelessness. Adopting a community psychology perspective, this study emphasized context and social action and advocacy as a primary goal (Kloos, Hill, Thomas, Wandersman, Elias, & Dalton, 2012). With a commitment to social justice, the ultimate goal of this study was to produce findings that could be used to improve the lives of those people experiencing homelessness and the communities in which they live. This chapter explores these perspectives, discusses how narrative has been used in community psychology, and suggests how a combined approach of narrative inquiry and community psychology can be useful for advancing research, theory, and practice.

### Narrative Inquiry

With its origins in literary theory, narrative inquiry has become widespread and multidisciplinary, expanding to political science, policy studies, communication, psychology, and philosophy. Since the "narrative turn" in the 1970s and 1980s, social scientists have increasingly used narrative to understand social phenomena and human behavior (Czarniawska, 2004). "Narrative" has been used as a heuristic, a content of analysis, a form of analysis, a research paradigm, and even as a metaphor for psychology (Hammack & Pilecki, 2012; Sarbin, 1986). Within psychology, narrative studies first gained prominence in clinical psychology (Sarbin, 1986) and since have been used in clinical, cultural, political, social, personality, developmental, and health psychology (Hammack & Pilecki, 2012; Murray, 2000). In narrative psychology, the focus is on the way people use narrative to make sense of their everyday experiences, constructing self-narratives in which they are the lead actor (Sarbin, 1986). Thus,

narrative inquiry in psychology has been primarily applied at an individual level. However, political psychologists, Hammack and Pilecki (2012), emphasized the *function* of narrative as organizational tool, as "the sensible organization of thought through language, internalized or externalized, which serves to create a sense of personal coherence and collective solidarity and to legitimize collective beliefs, emotions, and actions" (p. 78). While narrative study has primarily been the work of qualitative researchers, it can also be studied quantitatively (Jones & McBeth, 2010). Despite these differences in application, narrative has proven useful across disciplines and subfields of psychology.

A general understanding exists amidst these various fields that narrative is an organizing structure applied to chaotic events in order to give them meaning (Elliott, 2005). As an organizing structure, narrative is concerned with chronology. Therefore, narratives are comprised of a sequence of events and includes components such as characters, plot, and setting. Narratives are characterized by three main features: temporality, meaning, and sociality (Elliott, 2005 cited in Tamboukou, 2015). Additionally, they construct meaning for the narrator *and* convey that meaning to the intended audience (even if the audience is the self). Narratives are constructed with a particular audience in mind and are often co-constructed between the narrator and audience with an intended message (Reissman, 2008). Therefore, narratives, even at the individual-level, are inherently social. Some researchers have argued that all of social life is enacted narrative (MacIntyre, 1990).

**Dominant Cultural Narratives**

Narratives do not just occur at the individual-level; they also occur at the societal level. In community psychology, these societal-level narratives are often referred to as "dominant cultural narratives" (Rappaport, 1995). Dominant cultural narratives are also called master narratives,

cultural narratives, and Discourses. Rappaport (2000) defined dominant cultural narratives as "overlearned stories communicated through mass media or other large social and cultural institutions and social networks" (p. 4). He distinguished these narratives from individual "stories" and community narratives and positioned dominant cultural narratives as the "influential backdrop" that frames all other stories and narratives (Rappaport, 1995). As such, these narratives constrain what individual narratives and stories are available and can be told (and heard). These dominant cultural narratives are often communicated in the form of stereotypes, symbols, and images that are shared by members of a culture and can be so pervasive that they are difficult to escape or even to recognize (Rappaport, 1995; 2000). Thus, as an explanatory mechanism, dominant cultural narratives have much power in defining what holds true for a culture.

Evident in my use of his term, I rely heavily on Rappaport's definition of dominant cultural narrative. However, I also consider dominant cultural narratives to be a particular genre of discourse (Jones, 2016). Similar to narrative, "discourse" refers to the ways in which people use language to engage in social action with others and to create social worlds (Fairclough, 1992). Discourse can be "small 'd' discourse" that is carried out in everyday personal interactions or "big 'D' discourse," which refers to the ways in which language structures social reality (Jones, 2016). While dominant cultural narratives represent a genre of big "D" discourse, because these two types of discourses are mutually constitutive, "big 'D' discourse" is inseparable from "little 'd' discourse" (Jones, 2016). For example, Lyotard (1979) emphasized that when people hold a conversation, they are participating in the dominant cultural narratives of their social world. Therefore, discourse analysts often focus on the ways in which small "d" and big "D" discourses work together (Jones, 2016). Additionally, discourse analysis –

particularly critical discourse analysis – emphasizes the function of power in discourse (Fairclough, 1989; Foucault, 1980). By classifying dominant cultural narratives as a type of Discourse, I emphasize the inherent power that narrative has to structure and explain social inequalities through language that play out at individual and systemic levels. In other words, this study focused not only on identifying dominant cultural narratives but also on what these narratives accomplish and for whom (Tamboukou, 2015).

**Narratives at Multi-levels**

Narrative inquiry has recognized that narratives are constructed across multiple levels, leading to the conclusion that personal narratives are positioned in relation to a dominant cultural narrative or a master narrative (Hammack, 2011). Within political psychology, Hammack and Pilecki (2012) argued that narratives occur at two main levels – the individual and social level. Not only are narratives used by individuals in the process of meaning making, but also they exist in a material world in the form of texts and cultural products. Understanding this integration of the individual and the social can help psychologists understand the complex interaction of mind and society – something of relevance to psychology (Hammack & Pilecki, 2012). They advocated researchers use narrative engagement to examine this interaction, asserting, "narrative is thus the underlying process that links individuals to political contexts" (p. 78). (Hammack & Pilecki, 2012).

Rappaport (1995) added another level at which narratives might play out – the community level. Community narratives function as shared communal stories that can work against or with dominant cultural narratives. Narratives can be harmful when they produce devalued social identities and when people's individual narratives are in contradiction to dominant cultural narratives or community narratives (Rappaport, 2000). He argued that

community narratives may offer an important point of leverage for intervening in harmful dominant cultural narratives. Therefore, communities are important places for alternative narratives to emerge and to be built purposefully. Taken together, these literatures suggest that narrative is a useful organizational framework for understanding multilevel processes – a key focus of community psychology.

**Media and Dominant Cultural Narratives**

Dominant cultural narratives are often communicated and legitimized through mass media and social institutions and reinforced through community institutions and everyday practices (Rappaport, 1995). Researchers have argued that this is one of the most common ways in which dominant cultural narratives are created, legitimated, and distributed (Rappaport, 2000). Indeed, media often communicate in a narrative structure. For instance, news stories typically revolve around an episodic event and are organized temporally (Elliott, 2005). These stories are assumed to be of relevance (or that they *should be* of relevance) to a certain audience. In other words, inherent in news stories is the assumption that the story is "news," meaning that this narrative is legitimate and worthy of the public's attention and concern. Of course, who constitutes "the public" (and who does not) is also constructed implicitly through these stories. Thus, media is important for constructing notions of "the truth" because "the strategic discursive force of events comprises the power to produce explanations, justification and imagination" (paraphrase of Fairclough, 2010 in Livholts & Tamboukou, 2015, p. 28). In other words, media creates cultural meaning and functions as a resource that people use to construct their identities and to understand social phenomena (Silverstone, 2007). Because "the creation of meaning can be understood as a movement that connects, locates, dislocates, and changes social life" media's construction of meaning is a production of power (Livholts & Tamboukou, 2015, p. 27). This

power may be overlooked in everyday life, but it functions implicitly to decide what actors play what roles and what stories – and truths – are legitimate.

Another way the media exercises its power is by promoting some narratives over others, and these narratives stand to benefit different groups of people. For example, the media helps sift through competing narratives by using a "framing" process through which certain aspects of a social reality is portrayed at the expense of others (Bales, 2009; Iyengar & Kinder, 1987/2010; Mandeno, 2015). When different media outlets adopt the same frame, they solidify this frame into a dominant narrative which affects how people think about social issues (Bales, 2009). For example, Amundsen, Lichter, and Lichter (2005) found that media coverage on American youth tended to report three common frames: crime victimization, accidents, and violent crime, contributing to an overall negative dominant cultural narrative depicting the experience of adolescence as dangerous, which they argued has implications for youth interventions and policy.

Of course, dominant cultural narratives can be perpetuated through multiple outlets; however, media remains one of the most pervasive and has become a primary story-telling institution through which the discursive constructs of society are shared (Mandeno, 2015). The vast majority of research on dominant cultural narratives have involved "the media" in some capacity, including local and national print media, national and local news broadcasts, and online new sources.

**Narrative and Community Psychology**

Given narrative inquiry's emphasis on the self and society and community psychology's emphasis on individual in context, narrative inquiry and community psychology are a natural fit. Indeed, some prominent community psychologists have embraced narrative methods. For

example, Julian Rappaport elaborated on the empowerment potential in examining dominant narratives and personal stories in his 1999 Sarason Award acceptance speech (Rappaport, 2000). Additionally, a special section in *The Journal of Community Psychology* was devoted to narrative and psychology in 2000. Community psychologists have built upon narrative inquiry in a couple of important ways. First, and not surprisingly, community psychology theorizes narrative as multilevel phenomena (Hammack and Pilecki, 2012; Murray, 2000; Rappaport 1995). Rather than just individual or dominant cultural narratives, narratives can play out across multiple levels. Therefore, it is difficult to analyze one level without considering other levels. This elaboration on narrative reflects community psychology's commitment to multilevel analysis – one of the hallmarks of community psychology (Kloos et al., 2012).

In addition to recognizing the multilevel nature of narrative, community psychologists focus on the power of narrative at the community level. Community narratives function to define group membership and collective identity, to create a sense of community, and to construct members' individual identities (Mankowski & Rappaport, 2000). Within this framework, narratives function as resources (Stuber, 2000; Rappaport 2000). Stuber (2000) even suggested that researchers could use the number of community narratives as a measure of the ever-elusive construct sense of community. Mankowski and Rappaport (2000) posited, "a well-developed community narrative provides an alternative way of constructing personal stories to those offered in settings shaped by dominant cultural narratives" (p. 489). However, these notions of community narratives begs the question: what happens when individuals do not have access to community narratives? And how can these community narratives affect or change the dominant cultural narrative? Despite the suggestion of community narratives' transformative potential, persons experiencing homelessness often do not have access to the community much less to

narrative resources that would allow them a voice in the dominant homeless narrative, even while it directly refers to them.

**Opportunities for social change.** Underlying community psychologists' work with narrative is the assumption that narrative inquiry should be used to improve the wellbeing of people and communities. Social action that works toward social justice is at the heart of community psychology research and practice (Kloos, et al., 2012). Researchers have long recognized the potential of utilizing dominant cultural narratives to enact social change (Czarniawska, 2004; Gergen, 1985; Jones, 2016). Community psychologists, in particular, have embraced the opportunities that narrative has for empowerment (Rappaport, 1995). Similar to Silverstone (2007), Rappaport views narrative as a resource that is distributed unevenly in society (Rappaport, 1995). Narratives decide what identities are available and for whom as well as determine what is "true" within a society. Importantly, Rappaport argued that the creation of new narratives is a form of social change, particularly when they are used to challenge a harmful dominant cultural narrative. While creating new narratives at an individual level is important, constructing new community narratives has more collective power for challenging the status quo (Rapport, 1995, 2000). Keeping in mind the way that narratives function discursively at multiple levels, it is plausible that the narratives perpetuated by the media function to create certain responses to social phenomena, like homelessness. I suggest that dominant cultural narratives impact and are impacted by community narratives which can have impact on individuals and in turn on the types of policies endorsed. This study attempts to understand dominant cultural narratives on homelessness as well as community members' endorsement of these narratives in an attempt to intervene to produce healthier and more accurate narratives.

## Chapter 4. Current Investigation

This investigation consisted of two studies that aimed to identify the dominant narrative(s) surrounding homelessness in Hawai‘i and to analyze community members’ exposure to and degree of agreement with these narratives. Additionally, this investigation analyzed the association between the exposure to these narratives and attitudes and beliefs about homelessness and homeless policy. Importantly, this study focused on the local context of Honolulu, Hawai‘i.

### The Local Context: Homelessness in Hawai‘i

Estimates of homelessness in Hawai‘i was 6,530 people in 2018, including single individuals and individuals in families (BTGPIC, 2018). The vast majority (69%) of these individuals resided on O‘ahu (Honolulu County). From 2007 to 2017, homelessness grew by 16% statewide and by 24% on O‘ahu (USHUD, 2017). While homelessness on O‘ahu has been on a downward trend since 2017 (see Figure 1), the count of unsheltered individuals increased by 12% from 2018 to 2019 (Partners in Care, 2019). Most individuals experiencing homelessness on O‘ahu are concentrated in Honolulu (50%), Wai‘anae (19%), and the North Shore (10%) (BTGPIC, 2017). Therefore, much of the state’s homelessness and homeless resources are concentrated in the Honolulu area, where this study focused.

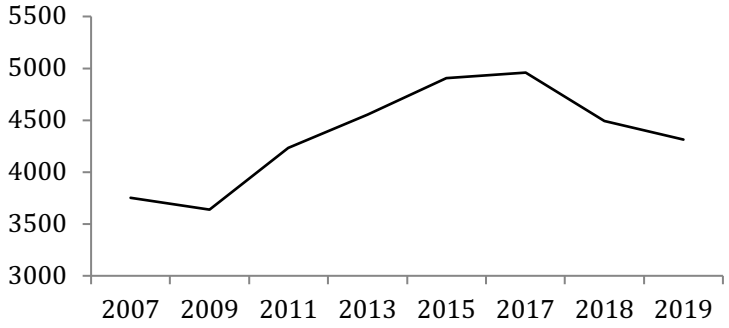


*Figure 1.* Number of persons counted as homeless on O‘ahu, 2007–2019 (BTGPIC, 2017, 2018; Partners in Care, 2019).

Multiple factors suggest that the local Honolulu community may be more aware of and more sympathetic to the plight of people experiencing homelessness than other communities. In part due to O‘ahu’s mild climate and dense population, people experiencing homelessness are highly visible. Large encampments are a common sight along busy streets. The largest encampment is estimated to comprise more than 200 people, and as a 2015 article attested, it “is not what you’d expect” (Terrell & Lum, 2015). A self-governed community, the Pu‘uhonua o Wai‘anae encampment is run primarily by women and is more than a decade old. The encampment leaders are currently working with the state to create a safe community for its residents (Friedeim, 2018). In addition to high visibility, local government officials frequently refer to the issue in public addresses. In 2015, Governor Ige declared a state of emergency due to the homelessness problem, which garnered national attention (Ige, 2015). While high visibility can be related to increased stigma, it also suggests increased community awareness of the problem.

In addition to signs of increased community awareness of homelessness, there is reason to assume that the local community may be somewhat more sympathetic toward people experiencing homelessness than other communities. The local context is characterized by high housing costs and high cost of living. The cost of living recently was estimated to be 88.3% higher than the national average (Barrington, 2018), and the median value of owner-occupied housing in Honolulu County is more than three times the national average (US Census Bureau, 2017). Hawai‘i residents recognize that affordable housing is a problem – even for the upper middle class. Importantly, homelessness also is contradictory to Native Hawaiian cultural values, particularly: aloha kekahi i kekahi (love for one another), aālama i kou kuleana (taking care of responsibilities at the individual, family, community, national, and international levels), kuleana

(responsibility to make things right at the appropriate time and in an appropriate manner), and kōkua aku, kōkua mai, pēlā ihola ka nohona ʻohana (to give help and to receive help because that is "the way of family") (KALO, n.d.). Additionally, Māmalahoe Kānāwai (The Law of the Splintered Paddle) emphasizes the importance of taking care of one another and has often been invoked in policy arguments over how to treat "the homeless" from a legal perspective (HLA, n.d.; Kauanoe, 2014). At the same time, Oʻahu's temperate climate may lead people to assume that residents choose to be homeless and even that people come here from the continental US "to be homeless in paradise." Thus, attitudes about homelessness or "the homeless" may be more sympathetic but are still likely to be varied.

Homeless policies in Hawaiʻi reflect a diverse and inconsistent view of the implied causes of homelessness and potentially effective solutions to the issue. The City of Honolulu, alone, has simultaneously enforced the criminalization of homelessness as well as more progressive policies that encourage service providers and police working together to avoid arrests of persons experiencing homelessness (Barile, Gralapp, McKinsey, & Pruitt, 2018). Taken together, the local context suggests varying and, at times, contradicting viewpoints but also an awareness of the problem as complicated and worthy of addressing.

**Research Questions**

The goal of this study was to understand Honolulu community members' attitudes, beliefs, and endorsed solutions regarding local homelessness and to examine how they are associated with local media coverage of the issue. This study's specific research questions included:

**RQ1**. What are the dominant cultural narratives perpetuated by the media about homelessness in Hawaiʻi?

**RQ2**. What media narratives are Honolulu community members exposed to and which do they endorse, and what attitudes and beliefs do they have toward "the homeless"? In particular, what beliefs do they have about what causes homelessness and what solutions would be successful in addressing it?

**RQ3.** How does exposure to and endorsement of these narratives vary by stakeholder? How do these attitudes and beliefs vary by stakeholder group?

**RQ4.** What is the relationship between media exposure and attitudes toward and beliefs about homelessness?

These questions were addressed through two studies – an exploratory media analysis (RQ1) and an observational study RQ2-4).

# Chapter 5.

## Study One: Exploratory Media Analysis

The first study was an exploratory analysis of media coverage of homelessness in Hawai‘i between January 1, 2012 and December 31, 2017. This time frame was chosen because it allowed for assessment of media coverage approximately three years before and three years after a highly publicized Housing First program was implemented in December 2014 (Smith & Barile, 2015). Additionally, during this time, O‘ahu experienced a precipitous climb and then plateau in the number of persons experiencing homelessness (BTGPIC, 2017; BTGPIC, 2018). While I originally planned to sample from online, print, and televised media sources, the sheer number of media stories led me to narrow my sources to the *Honolulu Star-Advertiser* (hereafter the *Star-Advertiser*), which, alone, had over 4,000 stories containing the word “homeless” during the time period. The *Star-Advertiser* is Hawai‘i’s most-read newspaper, and as a print and internet news source, it reaches 73% of all adults on O‘ahu (Oahu Publications Inc., 2017). Additionally, many of its articles are shared among television news stations on the islands, suggesting that it is a useful source for gauging general media coverage of homelessness in Hawai‘i.

### Methods

**Selection of articles.** Using the *ProQuest U.S. West Newsstream* database, I accessed all available *Star-Advertiser* articles from 2012 to 2017 ($N$ = 106,998). Search terms included “homeless” or “homelessness” which yielded 4,190 articles. I then searched for terms commonly associated with homelessness in Hawai‘i: “sit-lie,”[1] “vagrant,” “vagrancy,” “encampments,”

[1] Sit-Lie refers to the “Sit-Lie” bill, which is actually a series of bills making it illegal to sit or lie in certain public areas in Honolulu. (e.g., see Bill 62 at http://www4.honolulu.gov/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-152701/BILL062%2814%29.htm)

"squatters," and "shopping carts," leading to a total of 4,334 articles (4% of total articles in the database for this time period). From here, I excluded articles that did not meet criteria for inclusion. For example, I did not include articles referring to "homeless" pets or to people "made homeless" by a house fire. While the latter case does refer to people who are quite literally without a home, these people are not described as "homeless people" but as being "made homeless." In other words, "homeless" was not used in these instances as a character description. I also decided not to include calendars and reviews of plays or movies about homelessness unless the review went into great detail about a homeless topic and/or referred to local homelessness. After exclusion of inappropriate articles, the total number of articles numbered 3,238. From here, I separated different stories within the same article (e.g., different letters to the editor within the same column or different crime stories within the same crime report), leading to a total of 3,435 news *items*. I decided to separate news items because these items often included different and unrelated narratives archived within the same article. In other words, the archival process may obscure the actual amount of coverage. Finally, I took a random sample of 20% of the items, resulting in 687 news items for analysis.

**Narrative analysis.** In order to identify dominant cultural narratives, a team of research assistants, including one undergraduate student, two post-baccalaureates, and two graduate students, performed a narrative analysis of the 687 news items. Mankowski and Rappaport (2000) defined narrative analysis as an approach that "compares and contrasts texts… based on their substantive content, internal structure, and psychological functions" (p. 485). The team coded each news story for features related to content, structure, and function. For example, content included recurring topics such as drug/alcohol issues, public health concerns, and crime. Structure included characters, setting, and plot as well as chronological structure and whether or

not the story is episodic (McAdams, 1988). Function, in this case, referred to the function that the story served for the intended audience (e.g., whether or not the story functioned to illicit emotion, provide information, or spark outrage). The research team met weekly for two months to develop codes and themes. After an initial round of *in vivo* coding, the team developed a codebook (see Appendix A). Using the codebook, the author conducted a second round of coding, coding each article in NVivo software, paying special attention to plot to identify content and amount of coverage. A trained undergraduate research assistant who was not involved in the initial coding process coded a randomly selected portion of the sample using the codebook, achieving greater than 80% agreement for 99% of all 750 references ($n$ = 743) and more than 90% agreement for 97% of all 750 references ($n$ = 731), with a Kappa coefficient above a .7 for 99% of all references ($n$ = 739).

**Study One Results**

**Amount.** Overall, 3,435 news items were related to homelessness between January 1, 2012 and December 31, 2017 in the *Star-Advertiser*. The number of news items rose steadily from 272 items in 2012 to 784 in 2015 before dropping slowly through 2017 (see Figure 2).

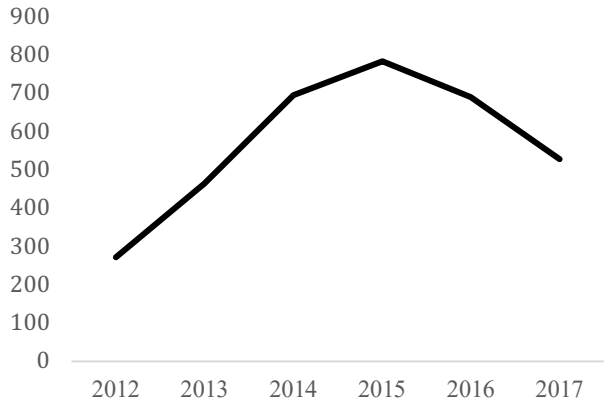


*Figure 2.* Total number of *Star-Advertiser* news items related to homelessness by year, 2012–2017.

**Article Content**. Of the 687 articles, 451 (66%) had a central narrative related to homelessness (see Table 1). The most common narratives were related to the homeless problem in general (*n* = 481, 70%); crime narratives (*n* = 257, 37%); people experiencing homelessness or homelessness as a nuisance to the community (n = 153, 22%); philanthropic narratives (*n* = 132, 19%); homeless people as threats to public safety (*n* = 106, 15%); homeless people as threats to the economy (*n* = 103, 15%); and health narratives (*n* = 90, 13%). The other 34% of items included homelessness as a peripheral narrative (see Table 7).

Table 1

*Most Common Media Narratives Related to Homelessness in Hawai'i*

| Narratives | # of References | # of Items | % of Sample (*n* = 687) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Homeless Problem | 1087 | 481 | 70% |
| Crime Narratives | 321 | 257 | 37% |
| Homeless People as Nuisance | 198 | 153 | 22% |
| Philanthropy Narratives | 212 | 132 | 19% |
| Threats to Public Safety | 137 | 105 | 15% |
| Threats to Economy | 134 | 103 | 15% |
| Health Narratives | 112 | 90 | 13% |

***Homeless problem narratives.*** Narratives relating to "the homeless problem" consisted of 1,087 references across 481 news items – the most of any other narrative type. These narratives included themes related to *solutions* to the problem, *causes* of the problem, *severity* of the problem, and *effects* of the problem (see Table 2).

*Solutions*. Sixty percent (60%, *n* = 414) of all news items referenced solutions. The most commonly-mentioned solution was housing programs, followed by legislation, social services, and "sweeps" (state or city ordered removal of persons from public areas). Housing programs were mentioned in 38% of news items that discussed solutions and were mentioned in 26% of all news articles overall (*n* = 181). Of solutions narratives, another 31% referred to legislation (*n* = 149, 22% of all sample items). Items coded for legislation included references to any bill that

appropriated money to housing programs or introduced a new law that affected persons experiencing homelessness. Legislative solutions, particularly related to "sit-lie" bills and sweeps, began to be discussed more critically over time. For example, 72 references coded as legislation (34% of all references to legislation) were also coded as criticizing or questioning legislation as a solution, with the bulk of these items published in 2016 and 2017. Social services were mentioned in 27% of all news items mentioning solutions and 19% of news items overall (*n* = 129). Sweeps made up 26% of solutions narratives (*n* = 123, 18% overall). In addition to housing programs and sweeps, news items referred to homeless shelters (*n* = 107), a controversial emergency shelter using shipping containers (*n* = 46), hygiene centers (*n* = 39), and "safe zones" (*n* = 31) as solutions to the homelessness problem. These solutions accounted for 22%, 10%, 8%, and 6% of solutions narratives, respectively. Notably, eighteen percent (18%) of solutions narratives referred to affordable housing as a needed solution for the homeless problem in Hawai‘i (*n* = 87, 13% of all items).

Analysis revealed that many of these solutions overlapped. For example, 38% of legislation narratives overlapped with sweeps (*n* = 56), and 33% overlapped with housing programs (*n* = 49). This overlap is unsurprising given that legislation often created funding streams for housing programs or legalized sweeps (e.g., the "sit-lie" bills). Housing programs also overlapped with social services because many programs offered wraparound social services. For example, twenty-five percent (25%) of narratives related to housing programs also referenced social services (*n* = 32). Additionally, news items often explored multiple solutions to the problem, recognizing that homelessness is a complex issue requiring complex solutions. Notably, references to solutions' costs increased over time, increasing from just 9% of all news

items in 2012 ($n$ = 5) to 25% of all items in 2017 ($n$ = 26). Thus, it appeared that media narratives showed increased interest in cost-effective solutions over time (see Figure 3).

Table 2

*Coding Coverage of Most Common Media Themes Referring to the Homeless Problem in Hawai'i*

| Theme | Sub-theme | # of References | # of Items | % of Narrative ($n$ = 481) | % of Theme | % of Sample ($n$ = 687) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Solutions | | 881 | 414 | 86% | 100% | 60% |
| | Housing Programs | 316 | 181 | 38% | 44% | 26% |
| | Legislation | 214 | 149 | 31% | 36% | 22% |
| | Social services | 207 | 129 | 27% | 31% | 19% |
| | Sweeps | 174 | 123 | 26% | 30% | 18% |
| | Shelters | 182 | 107 | 22% | 26% | 16% |
| | Affordable Housing | 124 | 87 | 18% | 21% | 13% |
| | Emergency Shelter | 53 | 46 | 10% | 11% | 7% |
| | Hygiene Centers | 47 | 39 | 8% | 9% | 6% |
| | Safe Zones | 33 | 31 | 6% | 7% | 5% |
| Causes | | 289 | 195 | 41% | 100% | 28% |
| | Macro | 141 | 113 | 23% | 58% | 16% |
| | Micro | 128 | 93 | 19% | 48% | 14% |
| | Migration | 33 | 29 | 6% | 15% | 4% |
| Severity | | 263 | 172 | 36% | 100% | 25% |
| Effects | | 58 | 46 | 10% | 100% | 7% |

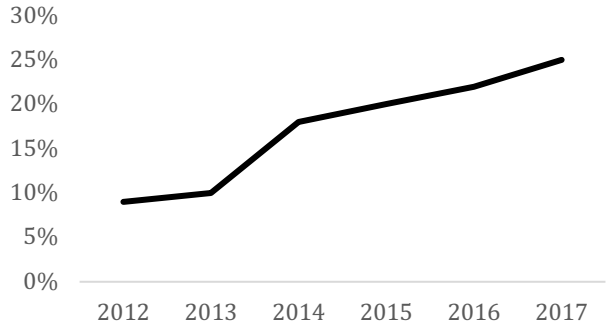


*Figure 3.* Percent of news items discussing the costs of solutions to homelessness by year, 2012–2017.

*Causes*. While causes were mentioned in only 28% of all sampled news items ($n$ = 195), when a cause was mentioned it was most likely to be a macro-level cause. Fifty-eight percent of items that referenced causes, referenced macro-level causes ($n$ = 113). These types of causes

were mentioned in 16% of all news items. However, micro-level causes were also mentioned often, comprising 49% of items that referred to causes and 14% of the sample overall ($n$ = 93). Indeed, the two most commonly-mentioned causes included a macro level cause, lack of affordable housing ($n$ = 73) and a micro-level cause, personal choice ($n$ = 43), comprising 37% and 22% of all causes items, respectively. Other references to macro-level causes included inefficient governance (13% of items mentioning causes, $n$ = 26), poverty (9%, $n$ = 17), tourism/vacation rentals (8%, $n$ = 16), low wages (6%, $n$ = 12), high cost of living (4%, $n$ = 8), and lack of jobs (3%, $n$ = 5). News items that mentioned micro-level causes included items that referenced drug/alcohol (10%, $n$ = 20), laziness (10%, $n$ = 19), mental illness (9%, $n$ = 18), disability (9%, $n$ = 17), and job loss (7%, $n$ = 13). Fifteen percent ($n$ = 29) of items that referenced causes included a reference to migration as a cause of homelessness (e.g., people moving from the mainland or COFA migrants from the Federated States of Micronesia; see Table 3).

*Severity*. Notably, a quarter of the sample referred to the severity of the problem, often referring to homelessness as a "crisis" or "disaster" (263 references across 172 news items). The problem was described as "growing," "persistent," "overwhelming," and as a complex issue with "no simple answer." Most items coded for severity referred to the increasing numbers of persons experiencing homelessness – often in response to the annual point-in-time count data release. The most common refrain included Honolulu having the "highest per capita rate of homelessness in the country" (Nakaso, 2015). This specific reference was included in 13% of items referring to severity ($n$ = 22).

Table 3

*Coding Coverage of Most Common Themes Referring to Causes of Homelessness in Hawai'i*

| Sub-theme | Types | # of References | # of Items | % of Theme ($n$ = 195) | % of Sample ($n$ = 687) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Macro | | 141 | 113 | 58% | 16% |
| | Lack of Affordable Housing | 87 | 73 | 37% | 11% |
| | Inefficient Governance | 26 | 26 | 13% | 4% |
| | Poverty | 18 | 17 | 9% | 2% |
| | Tourism/Vacation Rentals | 18 | 16 | 8% | 2% |
| | Low Wages | 13 | 12 | 6% | 2% |
| | High Cost of Living | 8 | 8 | 4% | 1% |
| | Lack of Jobs | 6 | 5 | 3% | <1% |
| Micro | | 128 | 93 | 49% | 14% |
| | Choice | 52 | 43 | 22% | 6% |
| | Drug/Alcohol | 26 | 20 | 10% | 3% |
| | Laziness | 22 | 19 | 10% | 3% |
| | Mental Illness | 23 | 18 | 9% | 3% |
| | Disability | 18 | 17 | 9% | 2% |
| | Job Loss | 14 | 13 | 7% | 2% |
| Migration | | 33 | 29 | 15% | 4% |

*Effects*. Narratives related to the effects of homelessness included 58 references across 46 items—or 7% of the entire sample. These narratives most often referred to effects of homelessness on the community and not on effects of homelessness on individuals experiencing homelessness. For example, the most commonly-mentioned effect involved people experiencing homelessness as nuisances ($n$ = 12 items, 26% of items referring to effects of homelessness).

***Crime Narratives***. Crime narratives accounted for 37% of all news items. These narratives made up a larger proportion of the items in years 2012 and 2013. The majority of crime narratives referred to people experiencing homelessness committing a crime (73%, $n$ = 188), particularly violent crime (30%, $n$ = 77). In fact, twenty-seven percent of the entire sample referred to people experiencing homelessness as perpetrators of crime and 11% referred to them as perpetrators of violent crime. Only 8% and 6% of news items, respectively, referred to homeless persons as victims of crime and violent crime (see Table 4). Only 2% of items referred

to homeless on homeless (HOH) crime ($n$ = 16), and 2% referred to HOH violent crime ($n$ = 17). In these narratives "homeless" was used as a character description much like the use of race and gender as opposed to a reference to an individual's economic condition.

Table 4

*Coding Coverage for Most Common Types of Crime Narratives Referencing Homeless Persons in Hawai'i*

| Themes | # of References | # of Items | % of Narrative ($n$ = 257) | % of Sample ($n$ = 687) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Homeless Perpetrators | 223 | 188 | 73% | 27% |
| Homeless Perpetrators of Violent Crime | 85 | 77 | 30% | 11% |
| Homeless Victims of Crime | 65 | 54 | 21% | 8% |
| Homeless Victims of Violent Crime | 50 | 44 | 17% | 6% |
| HOH Crime | 20 | 16 | 6% | 2% |
| HOH Violent Crime | 19 | 17 | 6% | 2% |

***Homeless people as nuisance.*** Many narratives referred to people experiencing homelessness as nuisances. Often these narratives further described "the homeless" as "taking" something from the general public – parks, streets, resources, tax dollars, etc. (99 references across 85 items). For example, a letter to the editor argued that "By focusing on housing first, we can get the homeless off our streets, parks, bus stops, and doorways, and return these areas to the public" (Germann, 2013). Another letter to the editor argued in 2016 that "[t]he public is effectively being denied the use of our parks" (Molnar, 2016). One letter to the editor even went as far as to suggest that "Hawaii is currently being tyrannized by the homeless. We are daily assaulted visually and physically by them. The general public can no longer use many park spaces because of homeless encampments" (Stevens, 2014). These narratives made up 22% of the entire sample ($n$ = 154).

***Philanthropic narratives.*** Philanthropic narratives included narratives that referred to people helping individuals experiencing homelessness as well as people experiencing homelessness helping other people. Overall, these narratives made up only 19% of the sample ($n$

= 132). While narratives relating to individuals experiencing homelessness helping others included only 21 references across 14 items, narratives relating to people helping the homeless included 196 references over 124 items – 94% of philanthropy narratives. These narratives typically focused on individuals helping "the homeless out of the goodness of their hearts."

***Threat to public safety.*** Fifteen percent of news items in the sample referred to homelessness or "homeless people" as threats to public safety ($n$ = 105). The majority of these items referred to homelessness and homeless people as a general threat (56%, $n$ = 59) and as a sidewalk obstacle (55%, $n$ = 58).

***Threat to economy.*** Another 15% of news items referred to homelessness as a threat to the local economy ($n$ = 103). While 14% of these economic threat items referred to homelessness as a general threat to the economy ($n$ = 14), the most common type of threat mentioned included threat to tourism. These narratives comprised the majority of the economic threat narratives (53%, $n$ = 55) and were referenced in 8% of the entire sample. Forty-two percent of economic threat narratives referred specifically to threats to business ($n$ = 43), and twenty-five percent referred to homelessness as a burden to taxpayers ($n$ = 26; see Table 5).

Table 5

*Coding Coverage for Themes Related to Homelessness as Economic Threat Narratives in Hawai'i*

| Economic Threat Themes | # of References | # of Items | % of Narrative ($n$ = 103) | % of Sample ($n$ = 687) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Threat to Tourism | 63 | 55 | 53% | 8% |
| Threat to Business | 53 | 43 | 42% | 6% |
| Burden to Taxpayers | 30 | 26 | 25% | 4% |
| Drain on Economy | 15 | 14 | 14% | 2% |

***Health narratives.*** Thirteen percent of items in the sample were coded as containing a narrative related to health ($n$ = 90). Of these items, 61% implied homelessness was a threat to

public health ($n$ = 55), and 38% referred to the connection between homelessness and poor health or to an individual experiencing homelessness being in poor health ($n$ = 34; see Table 6).

Table 6

*Coding Coverage of Themes Related to Health Narratives Referencing Homelessness in Hawai'i*

| Health Narrative Themes | # of References | # of Items | % of Narrative ($n$ = 90) | % of Sample ($n$ = 687) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Threat to Public Health | 65 | 55 | 61% | 8% |
| Homelessness & Poor Health | 41 | 34 | 38% | 5% |

***Peripheral narratives.*** While 66% of items had a narrative that centered around homelessness, peripheral narratives accounted for 34% of news items ($n$ = 235). Most often peripheral narratives overlapped with crime (23%, $n$ = 53), severity (17%, $n$ = 41), and political narratives (25%, $n$ = 59; see Table 7). Articles with peripheral homeless narratives overlapping with political or severity narratives often used the issue homelessness to make a larger point. For example, when Hawai'i announced it would welcome Syrian refugees seeking asylum, letters to the editor began insisting that Hawai'i needed to deal with its own problems, such as homeless, instead of opening its doors to refugees. Peripheral narratives overlapping with crime often referred to nearby homeless encampments whenever a crime occurred, and no suspect was apprehended. While the number of peripheral narratives were highest in 2015 and 2016, the proportion of articles with peripheral narratives was highest in 2012, which suggests that homelessness coverage became more direct and complex over time (see Figure 4).

Table 7

*Coding Coverage of Peripheral Narratives about Homelessness in Hawai'i Overlapping with Other Narratives*

| Narrative X Narrative | # of References | # of Items | % of Narrative ($n$ = 235) | % of Sample ($n$ = 687) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Peripheral x Crime | 71 | 53 | 23% | 8% |
| Peripheral x Political | 66 | 59 | 25% | 9% |
| Peripheral x Severity | 47 | 41 | 17% | 6% |

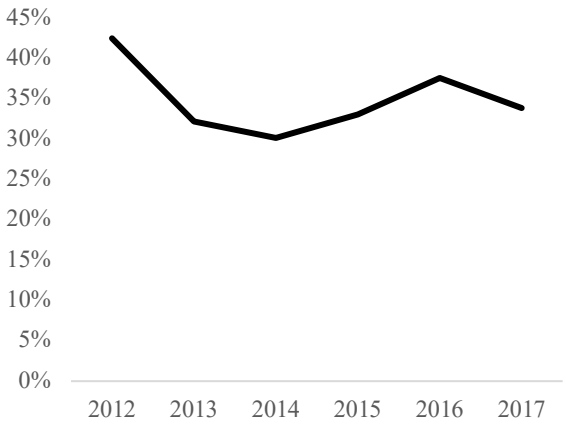


*Figure 4.* Percent of total number of news items containing peripheral narratives related to homelessness by year, 2012–2017.

***Homeless perspective.*** Notably, of all the news items, only 81 of 687 (9%) considered a homeless perspective. Even when this perspective was considered, it often was through the lens of a third person (e.g., service provider sharing the perspective of a client that they were serving). Sometimes, the perspective was given by a person who had previously experienced homelessness but had "pulled themselves up by their bootstraps" and represented a success story. If a person currently experiencing homelessness did speak for themselves, their speech was often overlapping with philanthropy codes (37%, $n = 30$) or with crime narratives (6%, $n = 5$). In other words, when persons currently experiencing homelessness spoke directly, it was as witnesses to crime or as a needy recipients of help (see Table 8).

Table 8

*Homeless Perspective Narratives overlap with Philanthropy and Crime Narratives*

| Narrative x Narrative | # of References | # of Items | % of Narrative ($n = 81$) | % of Sample ($n = 687$) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Perspective x Philanthropy | 44 | 30 | 37% | 4% |
| Perspective x Crime | 8 | 5 | 6% | <1% |

**Media measure.** These findings were used to create a survey measure to assess participants' exposure to and endorsement of these various narratives in study two (see Table 9). I created 17 headlines that represented some of the most common narratives as well as narratives

that were less common and defied common stereotypes (e.g., narratives involving people experiencing homelessness helping other people). Headlines were edited slightly to make them more general and applicable for participants from multiple communities in Honolulu. For example, the Hawai‘i News Now (Scheuring, 2017) headline, “Waimanalo Residents Complain about Growing Homeless Encampment” would be edited to “Residents Complain about Growing Homeless Encampment.” Because narratives related to the homeless problem and solutions to the problem made up the bulk of narratives related to homelessness, I created several representative headlines that referenced the severity of the homeless problem as well as different types of solutions, including sweeps, housing programs, social services, and affordable housing. Two of the severity narratives also were representative of many of the nuisance narratives: “Residents complain about growing homeless encampment” (see Table 9, number 1) and “Another park closes amid ongoing homeless crisis” (2). The third severity narrative, “Honolulu has the highest per capita rate of homelessness in the U.S.” (3) was one of the most common references repeated in news items related to homelessness. Thus, I used it as its own headline. Solutions narratives were either related to the need for new solutions or to the success or failure of current solutions. Therefore, representative headlines included “City needs to ramp up efforts to remove homeless from sidewalks” (13) and “More affordable housing needed to curb homelessness” (15) as well as “Housing program reports success in addressing homeless problem” (12) and “City clears 500 bins of trash from homeless encampment” (14). These narratives captured some of the most commonly referenced solutions as well as represented narratives expressing the need for solutions and narratives describing ongoing solutions.

Crime narratives that involved persons experiencing homelessness as perpetrators of a crime made up a significant proportion of narratives related to homelessness; therefore, the

majority included headlines referred to homeless persons as perpetrators of crime: “Homeless man arrested on shoplifting charge” (4), “Homeless return to park after sit-lie bill enforced” (6), and “Hard-core homeless seem content defying city laws, living off the grid” (5). Although narratives that referred to people experiencing homelessness as victims of crime were less common, I included one headline (“Homeless man killed in assault in Waikīkī” (7)) to represent this less-common narrative.

Because the most common types of economic threat narratives dealt with threats to business and tourism, I also included “Tourists hassled by aggressive homeless” (8) and “Homelessness deterring business, tourism” (9). Philanthropic narratives included two representative headlines of people helping the homeless: “Good Samaritan gives homeless man boots off his feet” (10) and “Local service providers conduct outreach to homeless” (16). The former represented those “feel good” stories that highlighted individual good deeds, while the latter captured more general narratives of help being provided to “the homeless.” To capture less-common narratives of persons experiencing homelessness helping others, I included: “Homeless man saves 2 young keiki from burning apartment” (11). Finally, to represent peripheral narratives, I included “State should spend less money on new projects, fix problem with homeless first” (17) to capture the most common type of peripheral narrative. These items are organized by theme in Table 9. Next, I turn to study two followed by the discussion on both study one and study two results.

Table 9

*List of media measure items by narrative type*

| Narrative Type | Sub-type | Headline |
|---|---|---|
| Homeless Problem; Nuisance | Severity | *Residents complain about growing homeless encampment* |
| Homeless Problem; Nuisance | Severity | *Another park closes amid ongoing homeless crisis* |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Homeless Problem | Severity | *Honolulu has the highest per capita rate of homelessness in U.S.* |
| Crime | Perpetrator of crime | *Homeless man arrested on shoplifting charge* |
| Crime; Solutions | Perpetrator of crime; Legislation (negative) | *Hard-core homeless seem content defying city laws, living off the grid* |
| Crime; Solutions | Perpetrator of crime, Legislation (sit-lie) | *Homeless return to park after sit-lie bill enforced* |
| Crime | Victim of violent crime | *Homeless man killed in assault in Waikiki* |
| Crime; Threat to Economy | Perpetrator of Crime; Threat to Tourism | *Tourists hassled by aggressive homeless* |
| Threat to Economy | Threat to Tourism; Threat to Business | *Homelessness deterring business, tourism* |
| Philanthropy/ Service | People helping homeless | *Good Samaritan gives homeless man boots off his feet* |
| Philanthropy/ Service | Homeless helping others | *Homeless man saves 2 young keiki from burning apartment* |
| Solutions | Housing Programs (positive) | *Housing program reports success in addressing homeless problem* |
| Solutions | Sweeps | *City needs to ramp up efforts to remove homeless from sidewalks* |
| Solutions; Health | Sweeps; Threat to Public Health | *City clears 500 bins of trash from homeless encampment* |
| Solutions | Affordable Housing | *More affordable housing needed to curb homelessness* |
| Solutions; Philanthropy/Service | Social Services; People helping homeless | *Local service providers conduct outreach to homeless* |
| Peripheral Narrative | Used as a Political Tool | *State should spend less money on new projects, fix problem with homeless first* |

# Chapter 6.

## Study Two: Observational Study

Study two used an observational research design and findings from study one to address research questions two through four. This study assessed community members' attitudes toward homelessness and beliefs about homelessness causes and solutions as well as assessed community members' exposure to and endorsement of each type of media narrative identified in study one (See Appendix B for survey). This study also examined if media narrative exposure/endorsement, attitudes, and beliefs varied by stakeholder group. Finally, it explored associations between attitudes, beliefs, and media exposure. In particular, based on previous research suggesting (but not testing) such associations, it examined if exposure to different types of narratives predicted community members' attitudes and beliefs and if these attitudes and beliefs, in turn, mediated beliefs about effective solutions to homelessness. Understanding these associations will be useful for informing research and practice related to media representations and public opinion on homelessness.

### Methods

**Participant recruitment**. Study participants were recruited between September and November 2018 and again between January and February 2019. Participants included people who lived or worked in Honolulu. I restricted the sample to Honolulu because I wanted to contextualize homelessness, and the vast majority of the state's homeless population resides in Honolulu (Partners in Care, 2019). Using purposive sampling, I recruited from groups known to have a vested interest in the homelessness problem: business/tourism industry, social services, law enforcement, neighborhood boards, college students, local government, and healthcare providers. Recruitment was tailored toward each stakeholder group. For example, I recruited

business/tourism industry participants by contacting the Hawai‘i Tourism Board. Neighborhood board members were contacted through recruitment emails to officers. Service and healthcare providers were recruited through the local Continuum of Care listserv and a healthcare service and advocacy listserv. Law enforcement was targeted by emails through a local diversion program's listserv. College students were recruited through University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa's SONA Systems undergraduate subject pool and through flyers at an exhibit on homelessness at the campus library. Additionally, I distributed flyers at local coffee shops to recruit for general community members.

**Procedures**. After obtaining approval from the University of Hawai‘i's Institutional Review Board, I recruited these groups via email, flyers, and in-person announcements. Interested participants could access the survey online, where they were briefed on the study, its goals, and its requirements. After providing informed consent, participants took the survey consisting of a series of measures, listed below, followed by a set demographics questions. Finally, participants had the option to receive updates on findings upon the study's completion. While targeting specific stakeholder groups, I did not restrict anyone from participating who wanted to participate. The only criterion was that participants must live or work in Honolulu.

**Participants.** A total of 358 people filled out the survey between September 26, 2018 and February 8, 2019. Six surveys were not included because the participants did not live or work in Honolulu. Therefore, the total number of surveys included in analysis was 352. The majority of participants were Asian (54%, $n$ = 191) and female (66%, $n$ = 232), with a mean age of 30. White participants comprised 40% ($n$ = 142) of the sample, followed by Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (19%, $n$ = 67), Hispanic (16%, $n$ = 55), African-American (4%, $n$ = 13), and Native American/Native Alaskan (4%, $n$ = 13) participants. Importantly, 31% ($n$ = 109)

of participants identified as multiracial. This ethnic breakdown roughly reflects the overall population of Honolulu County (US Census Bureau, 2017; see Figure 5).

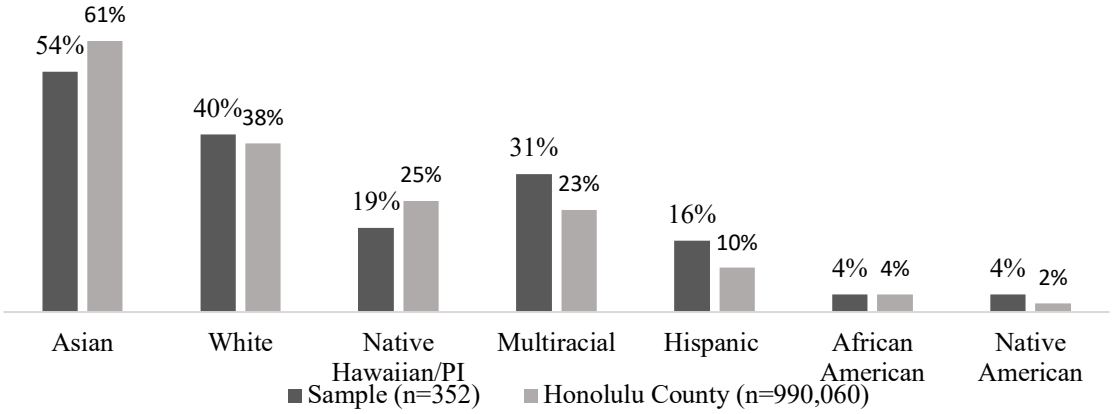


*Figure 5*. Racial percentages of study two sample and Honolulu County in 2017 (US Census Bureau, 2017).

Forty-nine percent of participants were not born in Hawai‘i (*n* = 172), while 45% were born in Hawai‘i (*n* = 157).[2] Of participants who were not born in Hawai‘i, the mean length of time in Hawai‘i was eleven years, suggesting that most participants were familiar with the local context. Forty-five percent of the sample had at least some college (*n* = 159), while 29% had graduated college (*n* = 103). The majority of the sample reported income less than $100,000 annually (*n* = 217, 62%), with 34% (*n* = 120) reporting an income of less than $50,000 a year. The majority of participants identified as college students (*n* = 207, 59%). Twenty-two percent of participants considered themselves community residents (*n* = 78); 15% were in healthcare (*n* = 54); 12% were service providers (*n* = 42); 9% were neighborhood board members (*n* = 32); 8 % were involved in advocacy (*n* = 27); 7% were involved in the faith community (*n* = 23); 5% were graduate students (*n* = 18); 4% were in state government; 3% were business owners (*n* = 10); another 3% were landlords (*n* = 9); 2% were in tourism (*n* = 8); and 1% were in city government (*n* = 4). Participants in law enforcement (*n* = 3), real estate (*n* = 3), and county government (*n* =

[2] Missing data on 23 participants.

1) comprised less than 1% of the sample, respectively. Twenty-one percent ($n$ = 72) of participants indicated having had experiences with homelessness and precarious housing. Ten percent ($n$ = 35) indicated having considered themselves literally homeless.

**Measures.** The survey instrument contained the media narratives measure developed in study one, along with ten other measures assessing attitudes and beliefs.

***Dominant cultural narratives.*** Media narratives measures asked participants to indicate the degree to which they had been exposed to each of 17 headlines and believed it to be an accurate representation of the situation in their community (see the previous chapter for information on measure development).

*Narrative Exposure.* To assess self-reported exposure to each of the 17 representative headline, participants were asked to indicate on a five-point scale from "Never" to "Always" the extent to which they had "encountered a similar headline or story in the local news (e.g., televised, online, newspaper)" A five indicates a high exposure to that particular narrative, while a one indicates no exposure to that narrative. See Table 10 below.

Table 10

*Exposure to Media Narratives about Homelessness in Hawai'i: Means and Standard Deviations*

| Variable | *N* | *M* | *SD* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Residents complain about growing homeless encampment | 334 | 3.45 | 1.01 |
| 2. Another park closes amid ongoing homeless crisis | 326 | 3.03 | 1.21 |
| 3. Honolulu has the highest per capita rate of homelessness in U.S. | 323 | 3.61 | 1.14 |
| 4. Homeless man arrested on shoplifting charge | 323 | 2.72 | 1.08 |
| 5. Hard-core homeless seem content defying city laws, living off the grid | 322 | 2.44 | 1.10 |
| 6. Homeless return to park after sit-lie bill enforced | 320 | 2.96 | 1.23 |
| 7. Homeless man killed in assault in Waikīkī | 325 | 2.48 | 1.01 |
| 8. Tourists hassled by aggressive homeless | 323 | 2.43 | 1.09 |
| 9. Homelessness deterring business, tourism | 324 | 3.15 | 1.10 |
| 10. Good Samaritan gives homeless man boots off his feet | 324 | 2.16 | .98 |
| 11. Homeless man saves 2 young keiki from burning apartment | 325 | 1.54 | .81 |
| 12. Housing program reports success in addressing homeless problem | 324 | 2.27 | .97 |
| 13. City needs to ramp up efforts to remove homeless from sidewalks | 326 | 3.48 | 1.09 |
| 14. City clears 500 bins of trash from homeless encampment | 324 | 2.70 | 1.17 |
| 15. More affordable housing needed to curb homelessness | 320 | 3.08 | 1.11 |
| 16. Local service providers conduct outreach to homeless | 323 | 2.73 | 1.02 |
| 17. State should spend less money on new projects, fix problem with homeless first | 323 | 2.45 | 1.10 |

*Note.* Exposure was measured on five-point scale from "Never" (1) to "Always" (5).

*Narrative Endorsement.* Narrative endorsement was assessed by asking participants to indicate, "To what extent do you think this headline is an accurate reflection of the homeless situation in Honolulu?" For each headline, participants could choose from items on a five-point scale from "Very Inaccurate" to "Very Accurate." A five indicates high endorsement of that narrative, while a one indicates low endorsement of that narrative, using the same headlines from the exposure measure. See Table 11 below.

Table 11

*Endorsement of Media Narratives about Homelessness in Hawai'i: Means and Standard Deviations*

| Variable | *N* | *M* | *SD* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Residents complain about growing homeless encampment | 333 | 3.70 | .99 |
| 2. Another park closes amid ongoing homeless crisis | 328 | 3.41 | 1.12 |
| 3. Honolulu has the highest per capita rate of homelessness in U.S. | 325 | 4.05 | .98 |
| 4. Homeless man arrested on shoplifting charge | 326 | 3.11 | 1.07 |
| 5. Hard-core homeless seem content defying city laws, living off the grid | 325 | 2.88 | 1.15 |
| 6. Homeless return to park after sit-lie bill enforced | 324 | 3.48 | 1.10 |
| 7. Homeless man killed in assault in Waikīkī | 327 | 2.99 | 1.10 |
| 8. Tourists hassled by aggressive homeless | 323 | 2.89 | 1.20 |
| 9. Homelessness deterring business, tourism | 327 | 3.33 | 1.15 |
| 10. Good Samaritan gives homeless man boots off his feet | 326 | 2.73 | 1.10 |
| 11. Homeless man saves 2 young keiki from burning apartment | 327 | 2.38 | 1.12 |
| 12. Housing program reports success in addressing homeless problem | 327 | 2.74 | 1.08 |
| 13. City needs to ramp up efforts to remove homeless from sidewalks | 326 | 3.63 | 1.10 |
| 14. City clears 500 bins of trash from homeless encampment | 326 | 3.26 | 1.12 |
| 15. More affordable housing needed to curb homelessness | 324 | 3.67 | 1.12 |
| 16. Local service providers conduct outreach to homeless | 324 | 3.33 | 1.06 |
| 17. State should spend less money on new projects, fix problem with homeless first | 326 | 3.38 | 1.17 |

*Note.* Endorsement of each narrative was measured on a five-point scale from "Very Inaccurate" (1) to "Very Accurate" (5).

In order to simplify variables for path analysis, I collapsed the 17 media headlines into three narrative types: negative media narratives ($M$ = 2.94, $SD$ = .73), helping media narratives ($M$ = 2.45, $SD$ = .78), and positive media narratives ($M$ = 1.91, $SD$ = .70) (see Table 12 for breakdown of each narrative type). These groupings were made based on theoretical and statistical reasoning.

Table 12

*Media Headlines Collapsed by Narrative Type*

| Narrative Types | Headlines |
|---|---|
| Negative Narratives | |
| | Honolulu has the highest per capita rate of homelessness in the US |
| | City needs to ramp up efforts to remove homeless from sidewalks |
| | Residents complain about Growing Homeless encampment |
| | More affordable housing needed to curb homelessness |
| | Homelessness deterring business, tourism |
| | Another park closes amid ongoing homeless crisis |
| | Homeless return to park after sit-lie bill enforced |
| | City clears 500 bins of trash from homeless encampment |
| | Homeless man arrested on shoplifting charge |
| | Hard-core homeless seem content defying city laws, living off grid |
| | Tourists hassled by aggressive homeless |
| | State should spend less money on new projects, fix problems with homeless first |
| | Homeless man killed in assault in Waikīkī |
| Positive Narratives | |
| | Housing program reports success in addressing homeless problem |
| | Homeless man saves 2 young keiki from burning apartment |
| Helping Narratives | |
| | Local service providers conduct outreach to homeless |
| | Good Samaritan gives homeless man slippers off his feet |

***Beliefs about causes.*** Beliefs about causes of homelessness in Honolulu were assessed using an adaptation of Phillips's (2015) *Perceived Causes* measure and items from a reasons for homelessness checklist in Barile, Pruitt, and Parker (2018). Participants could indicate their perception of how likely each of 26 factors were to cause homelessness in Honolulu on a five-point scale from "Definitely Unlikely" to "Definitely Likely." For each item, a higher score indicated a higher degree of agreement that the item is a contributing factor to local homelessness (see Table 13).

Table 13

*Beliefs about Causes of Homelessness in Honolulu: Means and Standard Deviations*

| Variable | *N* | *M* | *SD* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Poor economic conditions | 350 | 4.20 | 1.02 |
| 2. Having a mental illness | 350 | 4.22 | .87 |
| 3. Having a problem with illicit drugs | 351 | 4.36 | .78 |
| 4. Limited availability of jobs | 348 | 3.63 | 1.19 |
| 5. Having a problem with alcohol | 349 | 4.16 | .85 |
| 6. Social inequality for different groups of people | 349 | 3.66 | 1.15 |
| 7. Being lazy | 348 | 3.49 | 1.17 |
| 8. Having limited education or training | 350 | 3.80 | .95 |
| 9. Having a physical illness | 349 | 3.89 | .93 |
| 10. Limited affordable housing | 346 | 4.36 | .92 |
| 11. Not working hard enough to earn income | 349 | 3.27 | 1.15 |
| 12. Lack of affordable healthcare | 347 | 3.80 | 1.05 |
| 13. Having limited opportunities in life | 351 | 3.61 | 1.06 |
| 14. Decline in public assistance | 348 | 3.51 | 1.10 |
| 15. Growing up in a home with limited income | 351 | 3.65 | 1.07 |
| 16. High rent rates | 350 | 4.36 | .87 |
| 17. Overall high cost of living | 351 | 4.45 | .85 |
| 18. Domestic violence | 349 | 3.65 | .97 |
| 19. Lack of discharge plan from hospital, rehab, or prison | 350 | 3.79 | 1.06 |
| 20. Having a disability | 349 | 3.87 | .99 |
| 21. Relocation | 351 | 3.46 | 1.08 |
| 22. Divorce | 350 | 3.15 | 1.09 |
| 23. Death in the family | 351 | 3.20 | 1.07 |
| 24. Losing disability or Social Security benefits | 351 | 3.79 | 1.01 |
| 25. Foreclosure | 349 | 3.78 | 1.03 |
| 26. Eviction | 349 | 3.99 | .97 |

*Note.* Belief in each cause was measured on a five-point scale from "Definitely Unlikely" (1) to "Definitely Likely" (5).

I collapsed these 26 items into six categories: local contextual factors ($M = 4.39$, $SD = .79$), individual deficits ($M = 4.10$, $SD = .71$), systemic factors ($M = 3.83$, $SD = .90$), limited opportunities ($M = 3.67$, $SD = .79$), fate ($M = 3.60$, $SD = .79$), and individual choice/fault ($M = 3.39$, $SD = 1.06$) (see Table 14).

Table 14

*Causal Beliefs of Homelessness in Honolulu Collapsed into Types of Causes*

| Cause Type | Cause | Cause Type | Cause |
|---|---|---|---|
| Individual Deficits | | Limited Opportunities | |
| | Drug problem | | Limited training/education |
| | Mental illness | | Lack of Affordable Healthcare |
| | Alcohol abuse | | Limited opportunities |
| | Physical illness | | Decline in public assistance |
| | Disability | | Growing up with limited income |
| Fate | | Systemic-level Factors | |
| | Eviction | | Poor economic conditions |
| | Loss of benefits | | Social inequality |
| | Foreclosure | | Limited jobs |
| | Lack of discharge plan | Local Contextual Factors | |
| | Domestic violence | | High cost of living |
| | Relocation | | High rent |
| | Death in family | | Lack of Affordable Housing |
| | Divorce | Fault | |
| | | | Laziness |
| | | | Not working hard enough |

***Beliefs about Solutions.*** To assess beliefs about solutions, this study used an adaptation of Phillips' (2015) *Perceived Solutions* measure that assessed the extent to which participants perceived different solutions "to be effective in addressing homelessness in Honolulu." The measure also included a qualitative, open-ended question, asking for "other suggestions for solutions." Participants could choose on a five-point scale from "Definitely Unlikely" to "Definitely Likely" the degree to which they thought each of 20 potential solutions would be effective to solving homelessness. Higher scores for each item indicated the perception that the item is/would be highly effective, while lower scores indicated the perception that the item is/would not be effective (see Table 15).

Table 15

*Beliefs about Effective Solutions to Homelessness in Honolulu: Means and Standard Deviations*

| Variable | *N* | *M* | *SD* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Residential programs | 343 | 4.19 | .92 |
| 2. Job training programs | 342 | 4.17 | .94 |
| 3. Mental health treatment | 342 | 4.37 | .85 |
| 4. Educational programs | 341 | 4.25 | .88 |
| 5. Drug and alcohol treatment | 340 | 4.37 | .83 |
| 6. Low-cost apartment buildings | 342 | 4.38 | .93 |
| 7. Short-term housing (i.e., transitional housing programs) | 343 | 4.08 | .99 |
| 8. Vouchers for housing (e.g., Sec 8) | 344 | 4.03 | 1.00 |
| 9. Medical care | 341 | 4.19 | .89 |
| 10. Outreach services | 343 | 4.10 | .96 |
| 11. Shelters for individuals who are homeless | 343 | 4.05 | 1.04 |
| 12. "Drop-in centers" | 342 | 4.01 | 1.11 |
| 13. Programs providing food for homeless individuals | 342 | 4.01 | 1.07 |
| 14. Faith-based programs | 341 | 3.42 | 1.14 |
| 15. Housing First programs | 342 | 4.15 | 1.03 |
| 16. Raising the minimum wage | 342 | 3.89 | 1.24 |
| 17. Increasing affordable housing stock | 343 | 4.10 | 1.02 |
| 18. "Ohana Zones" or "Safe Zones" | 341 | 3.87 | 1.19 |
| 19. "Sweeps" of homeless encampments | 342 | 2.94 | 1.44 |
| 20. Laws prohibiting living in public spaces | 342 | 3.01 | 1.48 |

*Note.* Endorsement of each solution measured on a five-point scale from "Definitely Unlikely" (1) to "Definitely Likely" (5).

These 20 solutions were collapsed into four groups: individual-level solutions ($M = 4.23$, $SD = .70$), societal-level solutions ($M = 4.07$, $SD = .81$), basic services ($M = 3.87$, $SD = .88$), and punitive solutions ($M = 2.97$, $SD = 1.39$). See Table 16 for explanation and breakdown.

Table 16

*Beliefs in Solutions to Homelessness in Honolulu Collapsed by Type*

| Solution Type | Solution | Solution Type | Solution |
|---|---|---|---|
| Individual-Level | | Societal-Level | |
| | Mental health treatment | | Low-cost apartments |
| | Drug & alcohol treatment | | Permanent housing |
| | Residential programs | | Short-term housing |
| | Job training | | Increase affordable housing stock |
| | Educational programs | | Vouchers |
| | Medical care | | Safe zones |
| | Outreach services | | Raising minimum wage |
| Basic Services | | Punitive | |
| | Shelters | | Sit-lie laws |
| | Soup kitchens | | Sweeps |
| | Day centers | | |
| | Faith-based programs | | |

***Attitudes.*** This study assessed attitudes toward "the homeless," particularly emotional response, empathy, stigma, and perceived dangerousness, by using previously validated scales, including the *Attitudes Toward Homelessness Inventory* (Kingsree & Daves, 1997), the *Emotional Responsiveness* scale (Link et al., 1995), the *Lack of Empathy for the Situation of Homeless People* scale (Link et al., 1995), the *Social Distance* scale (Phelan et al., 1997), and the *Dangerousness* scale (Phelan et al., 1995).

*Attitudes Toward Homeless Inventory (ATHI; Kingsree & Daves, 1997)*. This 11-item measure assessed attitudes toward the homeless on four subscales by asking participants to indicate the degree to which they agreed with statements from to "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree" on a seven-point scale. The *Personal Characteristics* subscale assessed the extent to which the participant believed the individual to be at fault for his/her/their homelessness ($M = 4.24$, $SD = 1.21$). The *Societal Causes* subscale assessed the extent to which homelessness can be attributed to systemic issues ($M = 5.04$, $SD = 1.34$). The *Affiliation* subscale examined how likely the participant was to associate with a person experiencing homelessness ($M = 4.17$, $SD = 1.37$), and the *Solvable Problem* subscale assessed the extent to which the participant believed homelessness is a solvable problem ($M = 4.36$, $SD = 1.44$). Scores on this measure range from 11 to 77, with higher scores indicating more positive attitudes toward persons experiencing homelessness ($M = 47.64$, $SD = 8.77$). See Table 17 for individual items by subscale. Kingsree and Daves (1997) found the entire scale to be reliable (11 items, $\alpha = .71$) as well as each subscale: Personal Characteristics ($\alpha = .72$), Societal Causes ($\alpha = .73$), the Affiliation ($\alpha = .65$), and Solvable Problem ($\alpha = .60$). Similarly, this study found the scale ($\alpha = .66$) and subscales to be reliable: Personal Characteristics ($\alpha = .62$), Societal Causes ($\alpha = .81$), Affiliation ($\alpha = .40$), and Solvable Problem ($\alpha = .72$).

Table 17

*Attitudes toward Homeless Inventory Items by Subscale: Means and Standard Deviations*

| Subscale | Item | *N* | *M* | *SD* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Personal Characteristics Causes | Most homeless persons are substance abusers | 342 | 4.38 | 1.72 |
| | Homeless people had parents who took little interest in them as children | 343 | 4.05 | 1.54 |
| | Most circumstances of homelessness in adults can be traced to their emotional experiences in childhood | 343 | 4.29 | 1.58 |
| Societal Causes | The low minimum wage in this country virtually guarantees a large homeless population | 342 | 5.02 | 1.71 |
| | Government cutbacks in housing assistance for the poor have made homelessness in the US worse | 342 | 5.21 | 1.51 |
| | Recent government cutbacks in welfare have contributed substantially to homelessness in the US | 343 | 4.87 | 1.49 |
| Affiliations | I feel uneasy when I meet homeless people | 340 | 4.02 | 1.73 |
| | I would feel comfortable eating a meal with a homeless person | 341 | 4.35 | 1.64 |
| Solvable Problem | Little can be done for people in homeless shelters except to see that they are comfortable and well fed | 343 | 3.37 | 1.90 |
| | Rehabilitation programs for homeless people are too expensive to operate | 343 | 4.32 | 1.69 |
| | A homeless person cannot really be expected to adopt a normal lifestyle | 341 | 3.23 | 1.78 |

*Note.* Attitude measured on a five-point scale from "Strongly Disagree" (1) to "Strongly Agree" (7).

*Emotional response.* This study used an adaptation of Link and colleagues' (1995) *Emotional Responsiveness* scale to assess the extent to which people feel emotions like sadness or anger when thinking about homeless persons (4 items, α = .60.). On a seven-point scale from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree" participants indicated the extent to which they agreed with each of four items: 1. "When you think about homeless people you feel sad" (*M* = 5.10, *SD*

= 1.56); 2. “It makes you angry to think that so many people are homeless in a country as rich as ours” (*M* = 5.26, *SD* = 1.67); 3. “You feel less compassion for homeless people than you used to” (*M* = 3.45, *SD* = 1.76); and 4. “Programs for the homeless cost taxpayers too much money” (*M* = 3.49, *SD* = 1.77). A higher composite score indicates more positive emotional response (with items three and four being reverse coded; *M* = 19.39, *SD* = 4.75; $\alpha$ = .65).

*Lack of empathy.* Lack of empathy toward persons experiencing homelessness was assessed using an adaptation of Link and colleagues’ (1995) *Lack of Empathy for the Situation of Homeless People* scale (six items, $\alpha$ = .70). Participants could choose on a seven-point scale the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with statements related to homeless persons, such as 1. “Being homeless frees you from many of the worries that other people have about jobs and family” (*M* = 2.93, *SD* = 1.71); 2. “It is hard to imagine what homeless people do with all the free time that they have”(*M* = 3.57, *SD* = 1.92); 3. “It is hard to understand how anyone becomes homeless” (*M* = 2.79, *SD* = 1.62); 4. “Most homeless people can be identified by their appearance alone” (*M* = 3.76, *SD* = 1.77); 5. “Laziness on the part of the homeless themselves contributes to homelessness” (*M* = 3.84, *SD* = 1.92); and 6. “Irresponsible behavior on the part of the homeless contributes to homelessness” (*M* = 4.39, *SD* = 1.79). A higher composite score indicates greater lack of empathy (*M* = 21.15, *SD* = 8.02, $\alpha$= .84)

*Stigma.* This study used an adaptation of Phelan and colleagues (1997) Social Distance scale and Dangerousness scale as an indicator of stigma.

Social distance. Phelan and colleagues’ (1997) *Social Distance* scale (4 items, $\alpha$=.85) asks participants about their willingness to engage with “Jim,” a hypothetical person featured in a vignette. This study replaced “Jim” with “homeless person in your community” and asked participants how willing they would be to “hire a homeless person to do odd jobs for you” (*M* =

2.58, *SD* = 1.03); "have a formally homeless person live in your community" (*M* = 1.90, *SD* = .95); "have a homeless person as a close friend" (*M* = 2.24, *SD* = 1.04); and "have a homeless person work at your local school" (*M* = 1.73, *SD* = .94). The items were scored on a five-point scale from "Definitely Willing" to "Definitely Unwilling," with a higher composite score indicating greater social distance (*M* = 8.43, *SD* = 3.21; $\alpha$ = .82).

Perceived dangerousness. An additional possible indicator of stigma toward homeless persons includes Phelan and colleagues' (1997) *Dangerousness* scale (2 items, $\alpha$ = .56). The scale included two items: "Do you think homeless people in your community would be dangerous to be around?" (*M* = 3.07, *SD* = 1.10) and "Do you think homeless persons in your community should be watched closely by the local police?" (*M* = 3.22, *SD* = 1.15). As with the previous social distance scale, this study replaced "Jim" with "homeless persons in your community." Participants could choose on a five-point scale from "Definitely No" to "Definitely Yes," with a higher composite score indicating greater perception of dangerousness (*M* = 6.28, *SD* = 2.06; $\alpha$ = .80).

***Degree of contact.*** To assess contact with persons experiencing homelessness, participants were asked to indicate to what extent they had had personal contact with persons who were experiencing homelessness. Because no established measure for degree of contact exists, this study used a combination of two items assessing personal contact with homeless persons asking, "Do you personally know a homeless person?" (35%, *n* = 117) and "Have you ever had an extended conversation with someone who is experiencing homelessness?" (54%, *n* = 181). The first item comes from Toro & McDonnell's (1992) survey, while the second item was added to assess more intimate personal contact. Responses included "Yes" or "No," coded as "1" and "0."

***Experience with homelessness.*** Taken from Toro and McDonnell's (2007) survey, these two items inquired about the participant's own experience with homelessness or precarious housing situations. Participants could choose "Yes" or "No," on the following items: "Have you ever considered yourself to be homeless (e.g., slept in a park or shelter?)" (10%, *n* = 35) and "Have you ever considered yourself to be precariously housed (e.g., staying with a friend because you had no other place to go)?" (20%, *n* = 69).

***Media exposure.*** Frequency of exposure to media stories on homelessness was assessed with a one item question: "How often do you read articles pertaining to homelessness in Honolulu?" Answer choices included "Rarely" (30%, *n* = 105), "3-4 times a week" (17%, *n* = 58), "3-4 times a month" (24%, *n* = 85), "1-2 times a week" (17%, *n* = 60), and "every day" (5%, *n* = 18).

***Demographics.*** Finally, survey participants were asked to indicate their age, gender (including self-identify), education level, ethnicity, whether or not they were born in Hawai‘i , and length of residence in Hawai‘i . Additionally, participants were instructed to identify which stakeholder group best described them.

*Age*. Participants entered their age in years (*M* = 29.74, *SD* = 16.60).

*Gender*. Participants were asked, "What is your gender?" and given the options "male" (31%, *n* = 110), "female" (61%, *n* = 216), or "self-identify" (<1%, *n* = 2), with the opportunity to enter additional text.

*Education level*. The survey assessed education level by asking, "What is the highest grade or year of school you have completed?" with the options: "Completed $9^{th}$ – $11^{th}$ grades" (2%, *n* = 8), "Graduated high school or GED" (17%, *n* = 59), "Some college" (45%, *n* = 159), "College graduate" (14%, *n* = 49), and "Completed graduate school" (15%, *n* = 54).

*Ethnicity*. Participants indicated their ethnic background by choosing all that apply from a list of ethnic backgrounds including: African-American (4%, *n* = 13), Alaskan Native (<1%, *n* = 2), Asian Indian (1%, *n* = 4), Caucasian (40%, *n* = 142), Chinese/Taiwanese (18%, *n* = 63), Filipino (22%, *n* = 77), Hispanic (9%, *n* = 33), Japanese (21%, *n* = 75), Korean (4%, *n* = 13), Middle Eastern (1%, *n* = 3), Native American (3%, *n* = 12), Native Hawaiian (15%, *n* = 53), Okinawan (1%, *n* = 4), Other Asian (1%, *n* = 4), Pacific Islander (5%, *n* = 16), Portuguese (7%, *n* = 26), Puerto Rican (2%, *n* = 7), Samoan (1%, *n* = 4), Vietnamese (2%, *n* = 8), Unknown (1%, *n* = 5), and Other (please specify) (2%, *n* = 7).

*Hawai‘i resident*. Hawai‘i  residence was determined by asking participants to select "Yes" or "No" to the question "Were you born in Hawai‘i ?" (49% "No," *n* = 172) and to indicate "How long have you lived in Hawai‘i ?" in months and years ($M_{years}$ = 18.83, $SD_{years}$ = 17.59).

*Stakeholder Group*. To determine a participant's stakeholder group, the survey asked participants to select any of the following that applied to them: local government (city, county, and state), service provider, neighborhood board member, law enforcement, healthcare, advocacy, faith community, college student, graduate student, business owner, real estate, tourism, landlord, and other. Due to small numbers in each stakeholder group, I combined these groups into four larger groups: service and healthcare providers (*n* = 34), college students (*n* = 163), business/government/community (BGC) leaders (*n* = 40), and participants who had multiple stakes in the issue (i.e., those who indicated membership in two or more of the above three groups; *n* = 79). Additionally, these discrete groups allowed me to use ANOVA to test for significant group differences. See Table 18 for numbers and breakdown of stakeholder type by group.

Table 18

*Stakeholder Group Collapsed into Four Types*

| Stakeholder Type | Stakeholder | Total | % of Sample | Group Only | % of Sample |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Students | | 222 | 63% | 163 | 46% |
| | College Students | 204 | 58% | 158 | 45% |
| | Graduate Students | 15 | 4% | 4 | 1% |
| | Both | 3 | <1% | 1 | <1% |
| Service/Healthcare Providers | | 98 | 28% | 34 | 10% |
| | Healthcare Providers | 40 | 11% | 14 | 4% |
| | Service Providers | 25 | 7% | 13 | 4% |
| | Advocacy | 14 | 4% | 3 | <1% |
| | More than one of above | 19 | 5% | 4 | 1% |
| Business/Government/Community Leaders | | 110 | 31% | 40 | 11% |
| | Neighborhood Board | 14 | 4% | 10 | 3% |
| | Faith Community | 11 | 3% | 1 | <1% |
| | Business/Tourism/Real Estate | 11 | 3% | 4 | 1% |
| | Local Government | 10 | 3% | 4 | 1% |
| | Residents not otherwise classified | 7 | 2% | 7 | 2% |
| | Landlords | 2 | <1% | 0 | 0% |
| | Law Enforcement | 2 | <1% | 0 | 0% |
| | More than one of above | 53 | 15% | 14 | 4% |
| Multiple Stakes (more than one of the 3 groups) | | | | 79 | 22% |
| Missing | | | | 36 | 10% |
| Total | | | | 352 | 100% |

*Note.* "Group only" refers to the number of participants who belonged to that group only.

## Research Question Two

**Analysis.** For study two, part one, I addressed research question two: What attitudes and beliefs do Honolulu community members have toward "the homeless," and what media narratives do they endorse and are they exposed to? To answer this question, I ran frequencies of relevant variables prior to collapsing them into groups.

### Results.

***Narrative exposure.*** Participants indicated that the type of narrative they were exposed to most frequently concerned the severity of the homeless problem in Honolulu. Fifty-five percent of participants ($n$ = 193) indicated that they had seen articles similar to the headline, "Honolulu

has the highest per capita rate of homelessness in the US," in the local news "Often" or "Always." Forty-seven percent (47%, *n* = 165) had seen media narratives similar to "Residents complain about growing homeless encampment." Additionally, a slight majority of participants (51%, *n* = 178) had seen headlines similar to "City needs to ramp up efforts to remove homeless from sidewalks." A significant proportion also had been exposed to narratives related to homelessness as a threat to tourism and business (34%, *n* = 119).

Participants reported the least amount of exposure to positive narratives, such as philanthropy narratives and narratives about successful solutions. For example, 19% (*n* = 67) of participants indicated that they had seen narratives similar to "Local service providers conduct outreach to homeless," "Often" or "Always." Only 9% (*n* = 32) had read about successful housing programs, and only 3% (*n* = 9) reported reading articles related to homeless persons helping others. See Table 19 for frequencies of exposure for each headline.

Table 19

*Frequencies for Exposure to Media Narratives about Homelessness*

| Variable | *N* | % responded "Often" or "Always" |
|---|---|---|
| Honolulu has the highest per capita rate of homelessness in the US | 193 | 55% |
| City needs to ramp up efforts to remove homeless from sidewalks | 178 | 51% |
| Residents complain about Growing Homeless encampment | 165 | 47% |
| More affordable housing needed to curb homelessness | 122 | 35% |
| Homelessness deterring business, tourism | 119 | 34% |
| Another park closes amid ongoing homeless crisis | 117 | 33% |
| Homeless return to park after sit-lie bill enforced | 114 | 32% |
| City clears 500 bins of trash from homeless encampment | 87 | 25% |
| Homeless man arrested on shoplifting charge | 77 | 22% |
| Local service providers conduct outreach to homeless | 67 | 19% |
| Hard-core homeless seem content defying city laws, living off grid | 54 | 15% |
| Tourists hassled by aggressive homeless | 54 | 15% |
| State should spend less money on new projects, fix problems with homeless first | 51 | 14% |
| Homeless man killed in assault in Waikīkī | 45 | 13% |
| Good Samaritan gives homeless man slippers off his feet | 36 | 10% |
| Housing program reports success in addressing homeless problem | 32 | 9% |
| Homeless man saves 2 young keiki from burning apartment | 9 | 3% |

*Note.* Exposure measured on five-point scale from "Never" (1) to "Always" (5).

***Narrative Endorsement.*** Participants also rated the extent to which narratives reflected the actual situation in Honolulu. The headline the most participants rated as "Accurate" or "Very Accurate" was "Honolulu has the highest per capita rate of homelessness in the US" (66%, *n* = 232). A large proportion of the participants rated other headlines related to the severity of the problem as "Accurate" or "Very Accurate" as well. For example, a majority of participants (60%, *n* = 211) felt narratives similar to "Residents complain about growing homeless encampment" to be an accurate representation of the situation, and forty-two percent (42%, *n* = 149) felt "Another park closes amid ongoing homeless crisis" accurately represented the situation in Honolulu. A majority of participants also felt that the need for affordable housing and for more efforts to "remove homeless from sidewalks" to be accurate reflections of the situation in Honolulu. Fifty-one percent (*n* = 180) and 52% (*n* = 183) endorsed these narratives, respectively.

Participants reported the least endorsement of positive narratives, such as narratives related to successful solutions and philanthropy narratives, particularly those narratives involving persons experiencing homelessness providing help to others. For example, the headline that the least number of participants rated as "Accurate" or "Very Accurate" was "Homeless man saves 2 young keiki from burning apartment" (13%, *n* = 46) Additionally, the headlines "Housing program reports success…"and "Good Samaritan gives homeless man boots off his feet" were rated as "Accurate" or "Very Accurate" by 20% (*n* = 71) and 22% (*n* = 77) of participants, respectively. See Table 20 for frequencies of endorsement for each headline.

Table 20

*Frequencies for Endorsement of Media Narratives about Homelessness*

| Variable | *N* | % responded "Accurate" or "Very Accurate" |
|---|---|---|
| Honolulu has the highest per capita rate of homelessness in the US | 232 | 66% |
| Residents complain about Growing Homeless encampment | 211 | 60% |
| City needs to ramp up efforts to remove homeless from sidewalks | 183 | 52% |
| More affordable housing needed to curb homelessness | 180 | 51% |
| Homelessness deterring business, tourism | 148 | 42% |
| Another park closes amid ongoing homeless crisis | 149 | 42% |
| Homeless return to park after sit-lie bill enforced | 149 | 42% |
| State should spend less money on new projects, fix problems with homeless first | 140 | 40% |
| Local service providers conduct outreach to homeless | 125 | 36% |
| City clears 500 bins of trash from homeless encampment | 124 | 35% |
| Homeless man arrested on shoplifting charge | 111 | 32% |
| Homeless man killed in assault in Waikiki | 105 | 30% |
| Tourists hassled by aggressive homeless | 92 | 26% |
| Hard-core homeless seem content defying city laws, living off grid | 88 | 25% |
| Good Samaritan gives homeless man slippers off his feet | 77 | 22% |
| Housing program reports success in addressing homeless problem | 71 | 20% |
| Homeless man saves 2 young keiki from burning apartment | 46 | 13% |

*Note.* Endorsement measured on five-point scale from "Very Inaccurate" (1) to "Very Accurate" (5).

***Attitudes.*** The *ATHI* subscales showed that on a scale of one to seven (with seven indicating high agreement) participants were slightly more likely to agree that they would be comfortable affiliating with a homeless person, to believe that homelessness is caused by structural factors, to believe that there are indeed viable solutions to homelessness, and to believe that homelessness is caused by personal factors. Overall, on a scale from 11 to 77, with 77 being the most positive, the sample average was a 47.64 (*SD* = 8.77). For emotional response, the average score was 19.39 (*SD* = 4.75) on a scale from 1–28, and the average composite score for lack of empathy was 21.15 on a scale of 1–42 (*SD* = 8.02).

*Stigma.* Social distance also was relatively low, with a composite average of 8.43 (*SD* = 3.21) out of a possible 20. However, perceived dangerousness was somewhat high, with a composite score average of 6.28 (*SD* = 2.06) out of a possible 10. See Appendix C for frequencies tables for all attitude items.

***Beliefs about causes of homelessness.*** The most commonly endorsed cause of homelessness was a drug problem (90% answered "Probably" or "Definitely Likely," *n* = 316), followed by high cost of living (88%, *n* = 310), high rent (87%, *n* = 307), lack of affordable housing (85%, *n* = 298), and mental illness (84%, *n* = 297). The least endorsed causes included death (43%, *n* = 151) and divorce (39%, *n* = 137). All causal beliefs and their frequencies are listed below in Table 21.

Table 21

*Percentage of Participants Who Endorsed Each Belief about Causes of Homelessness in Honolulu*

| Variable | *N* | % answered "Probably" or "Definitely Likely" |
|---|---|---|
| Having a problem with illicit drugs | 316 | 90% |
| Overall high cost of living | 310 | 88% |
| High rent rates | 307 | 87% |
| Limited affordable housing | 298 | 85% |
| Having a mental illness | 297 | 84% |
| Poor economic conditions | 290 | 82% |
| Having a problem with alcohol | 288 | 82% |
| Eviction | 269 | 76% |
| Having a physical illness | 259 | 74% |
| Having a disability | 250 | 71% |
| Losing disability or Social Security benefits | 246 | 70% |
| Having limited education or training | 238 | 68% |
| Foreclosure | 239 | 68% |
| Lack of affordable healthcare | 233 | 66% |
| Lack of discharge plan from hospital, rehab, or prison | 230 | 65% |
| Growing up in a home with limited income | 224 | 64% |
| Limited availability of jobs | 215 | 61% |
| Domestic violence | 210 | 60% |
| Social inequality for different groups of people | 207 | 59% |
| Having limited opportunities in life | 207 | 59% |
| Decline in public assistance | 197 | 56% |
| Being lazy | 182 | 52% |
| Relocation | 181 | 51% |
| Not working hard enough to earn income | 154 | 44% |
| Death in the family | 151 | 43% |
| Divorce | 137 | 39% |

***Beliefs about solutions to solve homelessness.*** The most commonly-endorsed solution to homelessness in Honolulu included mental health treatment (*n* = 297, 84%) and drug and alcohol treatment (*n* = 296, 84%), followed by low-cost apartments (*n* = 292, 83%) and residential programs (*n* = 288, 82%). Notably, the fewest participants rated sit-lie laws (40%, *n* = 141) and

sweeps (36%, $n$ = 128) as effective. See Table 22 below for full list of frequences for endorsed solutions.

Table 22

*Percentage of Participants Endorsing Each Solution to Homelessness in Honolulu*

| Variable | *N* | % answered "Probably or "Definitely Likely" |
|---|---|---|
| Mental health treatment | 297 | 84% |
| Drug and alcohol treatment | 296 | 84% |
| Low-cost apartment buildings | 292 | 83% |
| Residential programs | 288 | 82% |
| Job training programs | 278 | 79% |
| Educational programs | 277 | 79% |
| Medical care | 276 | 78% |
| Outreach services | 267 | 76% |
| Housing First programs | 268 | 76% |
| Short-term housing (i.e., transitional housing) | 265 | 75% |
| Shelters for individuals who are homeless | 261 | 74% |
| Increasing affordable housing stock | 260 | 74% |
| Vouchers for housing (e.g., Sec 8) | 253 | 72% |
| Programs providing food for homeless individuals | 255 | 72% |
| "Drop-in centers" | 250 | 71% |
| "Ohana Zones" or "Safe Zones" | 237 | 67% |
| Raising the minimum wage | 229 | 65% |
| Faith-based programs | 168 | 48% |
| Laws prohibiting living in public spaces | 141 | 40% |
| "Sweeps" of homeless encampments | 128 | 36% |

**Research Question Three**

**Analysis**. Part two addressed research question three: How does exposure to and endorsement of these narratives vary by stakeholder? How do attitudes and beliefs vary by stakeholder group? To answer these questions, I conducted a series of ANOVAs.

**Results.** Analysis revealed group differences for attitudes, beliefs. and media narrative endorsement.

***Group differences in beliefs on causes and solutions.*** ANOVA revealed that the only beliefs that differed significantly by stakeholder was the belief that individuals were at fault for their homelessness [$F(3, 312) = 5.24$, $p = .002$] and the belief in punitive solutions as effective for addressing homelessness [$F(3, 311) = 6.92$, $p = <.001$]. A Tukey post hoc test revealed that

college students were significantly more likely to believe that homelessness is caused by individual faults ($M$ = 3.54, $SD$ = .97) than service providers ($M$ = 2.76, $SD$ = 1.09). College students also were significantly more likely to endorse punitive solutions to homelessness ($M$ = 3.12, $SD$ = 1.26) than service providers ($M$ = 2.25, $SD$ = 1.64). Additionally, service providers were less likely to believe that homelessness is caused by individual faults ($M$ = 2.76, $SD$ = 1.09) than people with multiple stakes in the issue ($M$ = 3.35, $SD$ = 1.97). Finally, BCG leaders were significantly more likely to endorse punitive solutions ($M$ = 3.45, $SD$ = 1.37) than both service providers ($M$ = 2.25, $SD$ = 1.64) and people with multiple stakes in the issue ($M$ = 2.66, $SD$ = 1.40).

***Group differences in attitudes.*** Group differences also existed on all attitudes measures. For example, the *ATHI* showed significant group differences [$F(3, 312) = 11.76$, $p = <.001$], and a Tukey post hoc test revealed that service providers were significantly more likely to have positive attitudes ($M$ = 54.29, $SD$ = 9.98) than college students ($M$ = 45.53, $SD$ = 7.63), BCG leaders ($M$ = 47.20, $SD$ = 7.18), and people with multiple stakes in the issue ($M$ = 49.49, $SD$ = 9.80). However, people with multiple stakes in the issue were still more likely to have positive attitudes toward people experiencing homelessness ($M$ = 49.49, $SD$ = 9.80) than college students ($M$ = 45.53, $SD$ = 7.63).

Group means also differed significantly on emotional responsiveness [$F(3, 312) = 5.21$, $p = .002$] and lack of empathy [$F(3, 312) = 16.25$, $p = <.001$]. Tukey post hoc test showed that service providers were significantly more likely to have higher emotional response ($M$ = 22.09, $SD$ = 5.19) than both college students ($M$ = 18.73, $SD$ = 4.08) and BCG stakeholders ($M$ = 19.18, $SD$ = 5.22). Additionally, service providers were significantly less likely to score high on the lack of empathy measure ($M$ = 14.74, $SD$ = 7.94) than college students ($M$ = 23.69, $SD$ = 6.91),

BCG leaders ($M$ = 20.40, $SD$ = 8.52), and people with multiple stakes in the issue ($M$ = 19.33, $SD$ = 7.88). People with multiple stakes in the issue ($M$ = 19.33, $SD$ = 7.88) scored significantly lower on lack of empathy than college students ($M$ = 23.69, $SD$ = 6.91).

Group differences were also apparent on both stigma measures: perceived dangerousness [$F(3, 307) = 5.99$, $p = .001$] and social distance [$F(3, 312) = 5.29$, $p = .001$]. Based on a Tukey post hoc test, college students were significantly more likely to score higher on social distance ($M$ = 8.96, $SD$ = 3.02) than service providers ($M$ = 6.74, $SD$ = 3.47). Service providers also scored significantly lower on perceived dangerousness ($M$ = 5.00, $SD$ = 2.12) than college students ($M$ = 6.53, $SD$ = 1.84), BCG stakeholders ($M$ = 6.70, $SD$ = 2.08), and people with multiple stakes in the issue ($M$ = 6.10, $SD$ = 2.36).

***Narrative Endorsement.*** Examining narrative endorsement, an ANOVA revealed group differences on endorsement of all types of narratives: negative narratives [$F(3, 307) = 9.89$, $p = <.001$], positive narratives [$F(3, 307) = 6.25$, $p = <.001$], and helping narratives [$F(3, 307) = 9.82$, $p = <.001$]. A Tukey post hoc test indicated that BCG stakeholders were significantly more likely to endorse negative narratives ($M$ = 3.82, $SD$ = .59) than college students ($M$ = 3.24, $SD$ = .62) or people with multiple stakes in the issue ($M$ = 3.35, $SD$ = .67). However, college students were significantly less likely to endorse positive narratives ($M$ = 2.39, $SD$ = .88) than service providers ($M$ = 3.00, $SD$ = .84) or BCG stakeholders ($M$ = 2.85, $SD$ = .89). College students were also less likely to endorse helping narratives ($M$ = 2.81, $SD$ = .79) than both service providers ($M$ = 3.47, $SD$ = .78) and BCG stakeholders ($M$ = 3.39, $SD$ = .83). Finally, service providers were more likely to endorse helping narratives than both college students and people with multiple stakes in the issue ($M$ = 3.02, $SD$ = .86).

**Research Question Four**

**Analysis.** To test the theory that attitudes and beliefs about causes mediate the relationship between media and beliefs about solutions, I tested a series of path models using moderated mediation. Because theoretically, attitudes and beliefs would likely would not explain all of the impact of media narratives on beliefs, I conducted a partial mediation instead a full meditation. Given previous research showing that younger adults, females, and people with more contact with persons experiencing homelessness have more positive attitudes and tend to attribute homelessness to societal-level causes, I examined the role of these variables in these associations. Controlling for age, I treated gender and contact as moderators in the relationship between media exposure and attitudes and beliefs about causes. In particular, I anticipated that increased contact would buffer against effects of negative media. Additionally, given the stereotypically gendered nature of homelessness, I anticipated that different genders may be influenced differently by media coverage of the issue. Finally, I also examined if stakeholder group membership moderated the relationship between attitudes and endorsement of solutions because having a higher stake in the issue may lessen the impact of attitudes on endorsed solutions. Proposed models for attitudes and causes as mediators are below (Figures 6 and 10). Before conducting path analysis, moderator variables were recoded into dichotomous/categorical variables. Contact was recoded for previous contact yes/no; gender was recoded to "male" and "not male"; and stakeholder group was recoded as service provider yes/no. I chose to use service providers as the reference group because ANOVA showed that service providers tended to have significant differences in attitudes and beliefs about homelessness compared to the other groups. Finally, for attitudes I used the *ATHI* measure because this measure is more comprehensive and has more evidence supporting its use than other measures. It is widely used in healthcare settings

and has been shown to be superior to other questionnaires in detecting change over time (Buchanan, Rohr, Stevak, & Sai, 2007). Path analysis was conducted using collapsed media, beliefs, and solutions variables. Correlations for variables are in Table 23.

Table 23.

*Correlation Matrix for Path Analysis Variables*

| | ATHI | SIND | SSOC | SSERV | SPUN | CFATE | CINDEF | CLOPP | CCON | CSYST |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SIND | .11* | 1 | | | | | | | | |
| SSOC | .26** | .69** | 1 | | | | | | | |
| SSERV | .04 | .69** | .69** | 1 | | | | | | |
| SPUN | -.45** | .08 | .01 | .15** | 1 | | | | | |
| CFATE | .05 | .50** | .41** | .42** | .03 | 1 | | | | |
| CINDEF | -.12* | .50** | .29** | .33** | .08 | .67** | 1 | | | |
| CLOPP | .10 | .47** | .43** | .41** | -.06 | .61** | .52** | 1 | | |
| CCON | .21** | .45** | .52** | .37** | -.05 | .50** | .45** | .61** | 1 | |
| CSYST | .16** | .40** | .44** | .33** | -.07 | .52** | .43** | .62** | .52** | 1 |
| CFAUL | -.47** | -.10 | .03 | -.10 | .17** | .45** | .12* | .18** | .02 | -.03 |

*Note.* Variable names include ATHI (Attitudes toward Homelessness Inventory), SIND (individual-level solutions), SSOC (societal-level solutions), SSERV (basic services), SPUN (punitive solutions), CFATE (causes: fate), CINDEF (causes: individual-deficits), CLOPP (causes: limited opportunities), CCON (causes: local contextual factors), CSYST (causes: systemic factors), CFAUL (causes: individual fault/choice).

***Moderated mediation with attitudes.*** Examining the moderated mediation model with attitudes (see Figure 6), this hypothesis was not supported. Model fit was poor and the interaction between stakeholders and attitudes was not significant [$\chi^2(26, N = 352) = 156.12$, $p$ <.001; RMSEA = 0.127, CI90 = (0.108, 0.147); CFI = 0.829]. Therefore, I dropped stakeholder group from the analysis.[3] Removing the stakeholder interaction parameter improved model fit [$\chi^2(24, N = 352) = 18.93$, $p$=0.76; RMSEA = <.001, CI90 = (0.000, 0.033); CFI=1.000]. Despite improved model fit, none of the indirect effects were significant. However, certain parameters were significant (see Table 24). For example, positive media narratives significantly predicted beliefs in individual-level solutions, such that more exposure to positive media narratives was

[3] The stakeholder interaction was dropped from all subsequent models.

associated with less endorsement of individual-level solutions ($b$ = -.15, $SE$ = .07, $p$ = .041). Additionally, attitudes significantly predicted endorsement of societal-level solutions and punitive solutions such that more positive attitudes were associated with increased endorsement of societal-level solutions ($b$ = .02, $SE$ = .01, $p$ <.001) and decreased endorsement of punitive solutions ($b$ = -.07, $SE$ = .01, $p$ <.001).

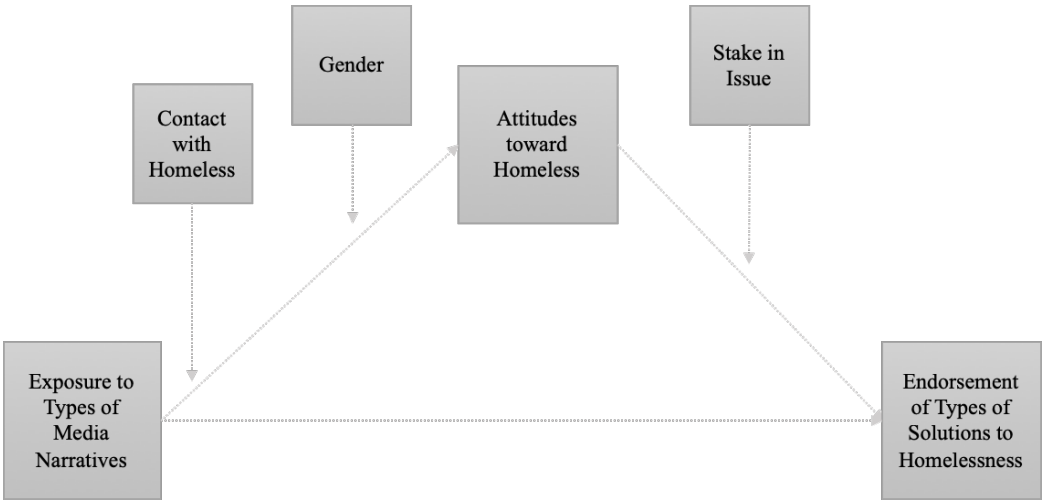


*Figure 6.* Moderated mediation model showing the predicted relationship between media, attitudes, and endorsed solutions, moderated by previous contact, gender, and stakeholder group.

Key interactions also were significant. On average, participants who had had high contact with people experiencing homelessness, had more positive attitudes towards persons experiencing homelessness than participants with low contact ($b$ = 4.09, $SE$ = .99, $p$ = <.001). However, negative media exposure and previous contact interacted to impact these attitudes ($b$ = 3.17, $SE$ = 1.55, $p$ = .041). Probing the interaction revealed that when participants with low contact were exposed to high levels of negative media, they had less positive attitudes than when exposed to low levels of negative media (see Figure 7). For example, when exposed to high amounts of negative media content, people with low contact with homeless persons scored 5.78 points lower on attitudes toward homeless than when exposed to low levels of negative media. On the other hand, when people who reported high contact with homeless persons were exposed

to large amounts of negative media, they tended to have more positive attitudes than when exposed to low amounts of negative media. However, only the simple slopes was significant for people with low contact ($b$ = -1.52, $p$ = .031).

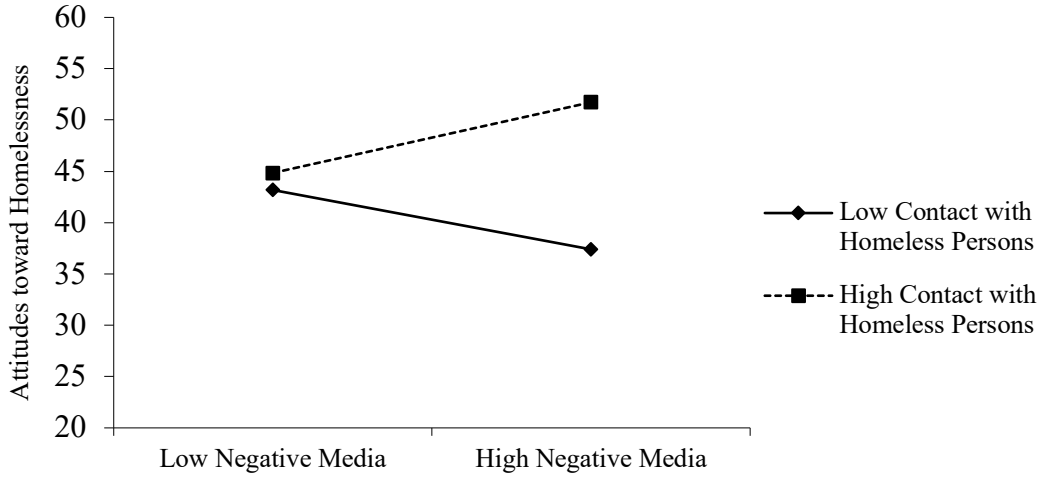


*Figure 7.* Interaction effects of contact with homeless persons and negative media exposure on attitudes toward homelessness (as measured by the ATHI). Higher scores indicate more positive attitudes.

The interaction between positive narratives and contact was marginally significant ($b$ = -2.99, $SE$ = .09, $p$ = .051). Probing the interaction effect between positive media exposure and previous contact with persons experiencing homelessness revealed that participants who reported low contact had more positive attitudes when exposed to high amounts of positive media than when exposed to low amounts of positive media (5.79 points higher; see Figure 8). However simple slopes was not significant. On the other hand, when people with high contact were exposed to high levels of positive media, they actually had less positive attitudes than when exposed to low amounts of positive media (6.89 points lower), and the simple slopes was significant ($b$ = -2.23, $p$ = .049).

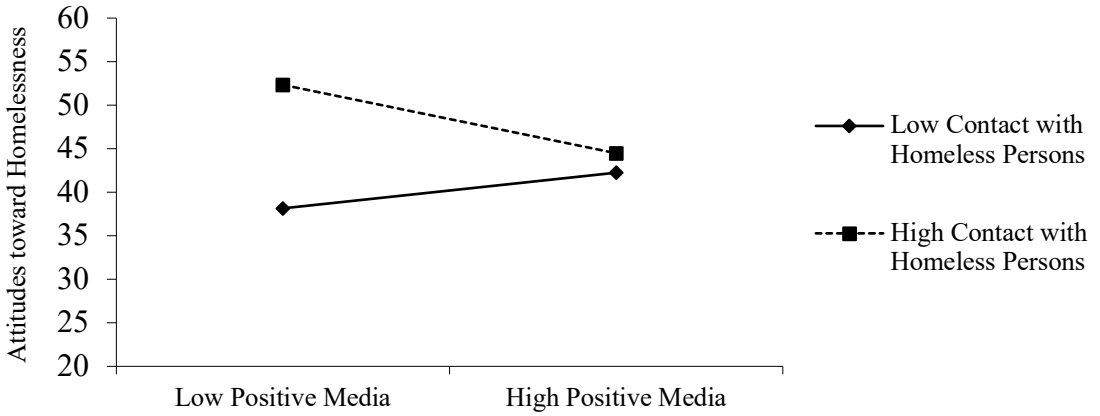


*Figure 8.* Interaction effects of positive media exposure and contact with homeless persons on attitudes toward homelessness (as measured by the ATHI). Higher scores indicate more positive attitudes.

In addition to contact, gender proved to moderate the association between positive media narratives and attitudes ($b = 4.13$, $SE = 1.72$, $p = .016$). Probing the interaction showed that men exposed to high levels of positive media scored 12.54 points higher on positive attitudes than men not exposed to high levels of positive media. Conversely, women exposed to high levels of positive media scored 3.97 points *lower* on attitudes than women not exposed to positive narratives (see Figure 9). However, simple slopes was significant only for men ($b = 4.89$, $p < .001$).

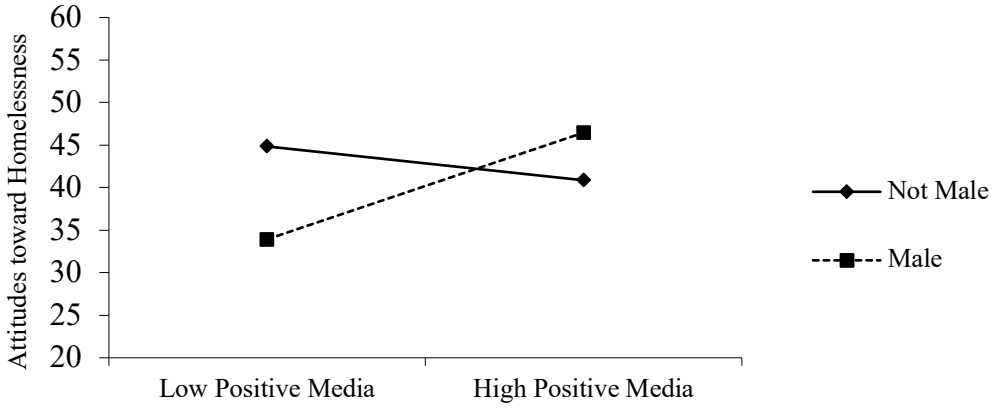


*Figure 9.* Interaction effects of positive media exposure and gender on attitudes toward homelessness (as measured by the ATHI). Higher scores indicate more positive attitudes.

Table 24

*Moderated Mediation: Attitudes toward Homelessness Mediates Media Impacts on Endorsed Solutions, Moderated by Gender and Contact with Homeless Persons*

| | ATHI | | SIND | | SSOC | | SSERV | | SPUN | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *b* | *p* | *b* | *p* | *b* | *p* | *b* | *p* | *b* | *p* |
| Age | .13 | .000 | .00 | .674 | .00 | .934 | -.01 | .235 | .00 | .938 |
| Negative Media | -1.52 | .204 | .10 | .206 | .03 | .698 | .04 | .691 | .16 | .221 |
| Positive Media | .76 | .528 | -.15 | .041 | -.01 | .882 | -.06 | .500 | -.06 | .594 |
| Helping Media | -1.55 | .214 | .06 | .393 | -0.03 | .695 | .09 | .211 | .19 | .104 |
| Gender | -1.31 | .216 | -.30 | .000 | -.40 | .000 | -.56 | .000 | -.13 | .358 |
| Contact | 4.09 | .000 | .05 | .575 | .10 | .268 | .01 | .900 | -.27 | .061 |
| Neg X Gen | -2.88 | .100 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Pos X Gen | 4.13 | .016 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Help X Gen | -2.15 | .247 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Neg X Cont | 3.17 | .041 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Pos X Cont | -2.99 | .051 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Help X Cont | .85 | .586 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| ATHI | -- | -- | .01 | .163 | .02 | .000 | .00 | .486 | -.07 | .000 |

*Note.* Indirect effects were not significant.

***Moderated mediation with causes.*** In addition to testing attitude as a mediator of media exposure impacts on endorsed solutions, I also tested beliefs about causes of homelessness as mediating this relationship (see Figure 10). I tested the same moderated mediation model for each type of cause: fate, individual deficits, limited opportunities, systemic factors, local contextual factors, and fault.

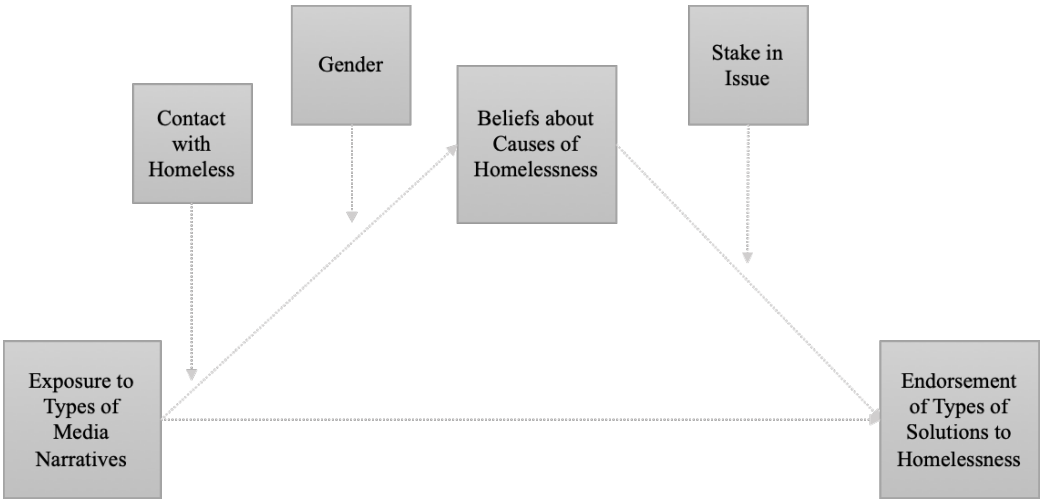


*Figure 10.* Moderated mediation model showing the predicted relationship between media, beliefs, and endorsed solutions, moderated by previous contact, gender, and stakeholder group.

*Individual deficits.* Indirect effects were significant for belief in individual deficit causes mediating the relationship between exposure to negative media and endorsement of individual-level solutions ($b$ = .10, $SE$ = .05, $p$ = .038) and basic services ($b$ = .08, $SE$ = .04, $p$ = .053). People exposed to more negative narratives were more likely to believe in individual deficit causes ($b$ = .22, $SE$ = .10, $p$ = .032), and people believing in individual deficits causes were more likely to endorse individual-level solutions ($b$ = .47, $SE$ = .08, $p$ <.001) and basic services ($b$ = .35, $SE$ = .08, $p$ <.001). Other parameters were significant (see Table 25). For example, belief in individual deficit causes significantly predicted greater endorsement of systemic level solutions ($b$ = .27, $SE$ = .10, $p$ = .006). Somewhat surprising, a main effect was found for high exposure to helping narratives and greater endorsement of punitive solutions ($b$ = .31, $SE$ = .12, $p$ = .010).

Table 25

*Moderated mediation: Beliefs in Individual Deficits Mediates Media Impacts on Endorsed Solutions, Moderated by Gender and Contact with Homeless Persons*

| | Cause—Ind Def | | SIND | | SSOC | | SSERV | | SPUN | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *b* | *p* | *b* | *p* | *b* | *p* | *b* | *p* | *b* | *p* |
| Age | .00 | .988 | .00 | .462 | .00 | .392 | .00 | .248 | -.01 | .106 |
| Negative Media | .22 | .032 | .01 | .827 | -.02 | .780 | -.03 | .750 | .15 | .285 |
| Positive Media | -.07 | .551 | -.10 | .158 | .03 | .771 | -.02 | .841 | -.08 | .550 |
| Helping Media | -.02 | .877 | .07 | .216 | -.05 | .516 | .11 | .145 | .31 | .010 |
| Gender | -.19 | .037 | -.20 | .010 | -.37 | .000 | -.50 | .000 | -.02 | .891 |
| Contact | .08 | .334 | .02 | .756 | .16 | .088 | -.01 | .947 | -.54 | .001 |
| Neg X Gen | .23 | .259 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Pos X Gen | -.28 | .104 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Help X Gen | .08 | .655 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Neg X Cont | -.21 | .155 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Pos X Cont | .10 | .505 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Help X Cont | -.12 | .475 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Cause—Ind Def | -- | -- | .47 | .000 | .27 | .006 | .35 | .000 | .22 | .057 |

*Note.* Indirect effects were significant for Negative Media, Ind Def, & SIND ($b$=.10, $SE$=.05, $p$=.038).

*Limited opportunities.* Indirect effects were significant for belief in limited opportunities causes mediating the relationship between exposure to negative media and endorsement of individual-level solutions ($b$ = .13, $SE$ = .05, $p$ = .012), societal level solutions ($b$ = .13, $SE$ = .05, $p$ = .011), and basic services ($b$ = .13, $SE$ = .05, $p$ = .013). People exposed to more negative narratives were more likely to believe in limited opportunities as causal ($b$ = .28, $SE$ = .11, $p$ =

.010), and people believing in limited opportunities as causal were more likely to endorse individual-level solutions ($b$ = .47, $SE$ = .07, $p$ = <.001), societal-level solutions ($b$ = .47, $SE$ = .07, $p$ = <.001), and basic services ($b$ = .47, $SE$ = .07, $p$ = <.001). The main effect between helping narratives and punitive solutions remained significant ($b$ = .29, $SE$ = .13, $p$ = .020). In this model, helping narrative exposure also predicted greater endorsement of basic services solutions ($b$ = .15, $SE$ = .07, $p$ = .041). Finally, greater exposure to positive media narratives was associated with less endorsement of individual-level solutions ($b$ = -.19, $SE$ = .07, $p$ = .007; see Table 26).

Table 26

*Moderated Mediation: Beliefs in Limited Opportunities Mediates Media Impacts on Endorsed Solutions, Moderated by Gender and Contact with Homeless Persons*

| | Cause—Lim Op | | SIND | | SSOC | | SSERV | | SPUN | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *b* | *p* | *b* | *p* | *b* | *p* | *b* | *p* | *b* | *p* |
| Age | -.01 | .000 | .01 | .004 | .01 | .007 | .00 | .728 | -.01 | .093 |
| Negative Media | .28 | .010 | -.01 | .065 | -.08 | .292 | -.07 | .386 | .20 | .149 |
| Positive Media | .05 | .706 | -.19 | .007 | -.04 | .661 | -.09 | .247 | -.10 | .462 |
| Helping Media | -.17 | ..138 | .12 | .073 | .00 | .993 | .15 | .041 | .292 | .020 |
| Gender | -.38 | .090 | -.13 | .108 | -.25 | .011 | -.39 | .000 | -.09 | .583 |
| Contact | .12 | .159 | .01 | .910 | .12 | .143 | -.03 | .721 | -.51 | .001 |
| Neg X Gen | .09 | .613 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Pos X Gen | -.00 | .988 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Help X Gen | .03 | .843 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Neg X Cont | -.15 | .305 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Pos X Cont | .06 | .155 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Help X Cont | .04 | .789 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Cause—LimOp | -- | -- | .47 | .000 | .47 | .000 | .47 | .000 | -.06 | .633 |

*Note.* Indirect effects were significant for Negative Media, Lim Op, & SIND ($b$=.10, $SE$=.05,$p$=.038), SSOC ($b$=.13, $SE$=.05, $p$=.011), and SSERV ($b$=.13, $SE$=.05, $p$=.013).

*Fault.* While indirect paths were not significant for this model, gender and positive media interacted to impact beliefs that homelessness is caused by fault ($b$ = -.53, $SE$ = .21, $p$ = .010). Probing this interaction revealed that men exposed to high positive media were 1.64 points less likely to attribute homelessness to fault of the individual than men exposed to low levels of positive media. Conversely, women exposed to high levels of positive media were .48 points *more* likely to attribute homelessness to individual fault than women exposed to low levels of

positive media (see Figure 11). Notably, simple slopes were not significant for this interaction ($b_{male}$ = -.64, $p$ = .518; $b_{notmale}$ = -.11, $p$ = .872).

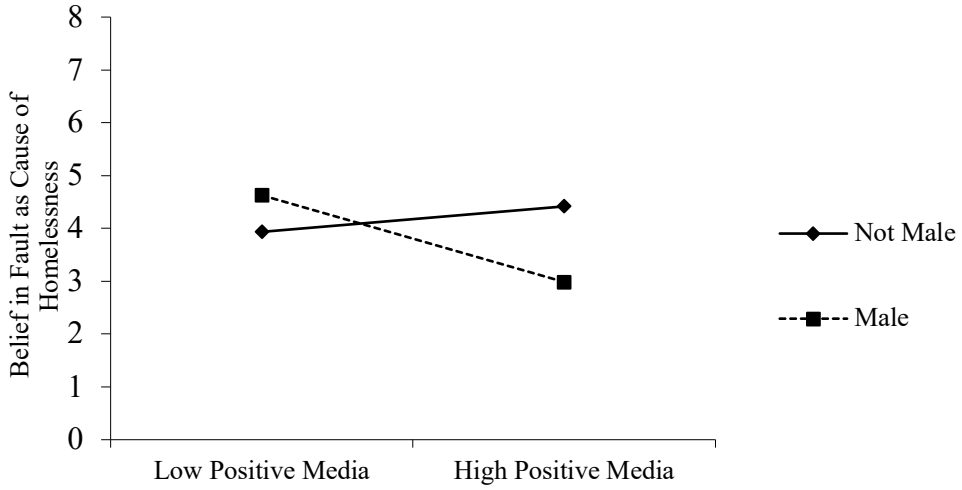


*Figure 11.* Interaction effects of gender and positive media exposure on beliefs in fault as a cause of homelessness. Higher scores indicate greater agreement that fault causes homelessness.

Other significant effects in this model included positive media exposure predicting less endorsement of individual-level solutions ($b$ = -.15, $SE$ = .07, $p$ = .047). Additionally, belief in individual fault or choice was associated with greater endorsement of basic services ($b$ = .11, $SE$ = .05, $p$ = .033) and punitive solutions ($b$ = .53, $SE$ = .07, $p$ <.001).

Table 27

*Moderated Mediation: Beliefs in Individual Fault Mediates Media Impacts on Endorsed Solutions, Moderated by Gender and Contact with Homeless Persons*

| | Cause—Fault | | SIND | | SSOC | | SSERV | | SPUN | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *b* | *p* | *b* | *p* | *b* | *p* | *b* | *p* | *b* | *p* |
| Age | -.01 | .001 | .00 | .441 | .00 | .572 | .00 | .510 | .00 | .776 |
| Negative Media | .17 | .281 | .09 | .241 | .03 | .724 | .02 | .825 | .13 | .316 |
| Positive Media | -.11 | .474 | -.15 | .047 | -.01 | .919 | -.04 | .614 | -.04 | .725 |
| Helping Media | .09 | .554 | .04 | .515 | -.05 | .468 | .07 | .360 | .22 | .069 |
| Gender | -.19 | .164 | -.20 | .001 | -.44 | .000 | -.54 | .000 | .05 | .733 |
| Contact | -.33 | .008 | .07 | .376 | .16 | .106 | .06 | .533 | -.36 | .013 |
| Neg X Gen | .10 | .245 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Pos X Gen | -.53 | .010 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Help X Gen | .28 | .204 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Neg X Cont | -.14 | .504 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Pos X Cont | .35 | .200 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Help X Cont | -.04 | .847 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Cause—Fault | -- | -- | .02 | .711 | -.07 | .182 | .11 | .033 | .53 | .000 |

*Note.* Indirect effects were not significant.

*Other causes*. None of the models testing other causes (fate, systemic factors, and contextual factors) showed any indirect effects. However, the main effects between exposure to positive media narratives and endorsement of individual-level solutions (unstandardized coefficients ranging from -.13 to -.21)[4] and between exposure to helping narratives and endorsement of punitive solutions (unstandardized coefficients ranging from .29 to .30) were significant for all three models. Additionally, beliefs in fate, systemic factors, and contextual factors as causes of homelessness were all associated with greater endorsement of individual-level solutions (unstandardized coefficients ranging from .32 to .41), societal-level solutions (unstandardized coefficients ranging from .37 to .52), and basic services (unstandardized coefficients ranging from .30 to .37). See Appendix C, Tables C2-C4 for full model results.

[4] For the systemic factors mediation model, the main effect of positive media narratives on individual solution was only marginally significant, with $p$=.052.

# Chapter 7. Discussion

This study took a comprehensive approach to understanding the relationship between media narratives and attitudes and beliefs about homelessness within the context of Honolulu, Hawai‘i. Leveraging exploratory narrative analysis and observational research design, it examined the dominant cultural narratives perpetuated by the local media about homelessness in Hawai‘i and examined participants' exposure to and endorsement of these narratives. It also assessed participants' attitudes toward and beliefs about homelessness and explored the relationship between media exposure and these attitudes and beliefs. Finally, it examined differences based on participants' membership to various groups in the community.

This study found that the most common narratives about homelessness in Hawai‘i included narratives related to the homelessness problem locally and specific solutions to address that problem. Other popular narratives included crime narratives in which people experiencing homelessness were perpetrators of crime as well as narratives related to homeless persons as nuisances, threats to public safety, threats to the economy, and "needy" recipients of help. Notably, the majority of these narratives were negative, and rarely were individuals experiencing homelessness given a voice. Of these narratives, participants reported the most exposure to narratives related to the severity of the problem locally. Additionally, participants endorsed this narrative more than any other narrative and were least likely to indicate that positive narratives, such as stories about successful housing programs and homeless persons helping others, were accurate reflections of the local situation.

Participants held relatively positive attitudes overall, with particularly low levels of stigma as measured by social distance. Additionally, participants were more likely to believe that a combination of structural-level and individual-level factors contributed to local homelessness,

with the most commonly-endorsed factor being a drug problem, closely followed by high cost of living. While individual-level solutions, such as mental health and substance abuse treatment, received endorsement from the largest percentage of participants, the majority of participants also indicated that affordable housing and permanent housing programs would likely be effective in addressing local homelessness. Notably, these attitudes and beliefs differed by participant stakeholder group. College students were more likely to have negative attitudes, believe that homelessness is caused by individual faults, and endorse punitive solutions to the problem. On the other hand, service providers were more likely to have more positive attitudes and were less likely to endorse individual faults and punitive solutions. College students also were less likely to endorse positive or helping media narratives than other groups.

Findings related to media impacts on attitudes, beliefs, and endorsed solutions indicated that some types of media exposure could predict certain attitudes and beliefs, but evidence for mediation was mixed. Negative and positive media exposure appeared to impact attitudes in the expected direction. This impact, however, depended upon gender and previous contact with persons experiencing homelessness. Despite these impacts, attitudes did not mediate the impact of media on endorsed solutions. However, beliefs that homelessness is caused by individual deficits and by having had limited opportunities did mediate the impact of negative media narratives on endorsement of individual-level solutions and basic services. Surprisingly, exposure to helping narratives significantly and consistently predicted increased endorsement of punitive solutions. Overall, media impacts did not explain a large proportion of the variance, and gender and previous contact with homeless persons proved to be stronger predictors of attitudes and beliefs than media narratives. Nevertheless, these findings suggest that certain types of media narratives—particularly negative media narratives—can predict attitudes and beliefs about

homelessness, and thus, these findings have implications for local policy and interventions as well as for research on media representations of homelessness. This chapter explores these findings in more depth, and Chapter Eight discusses future directions and the implications of these findings.

**Research Question One: Media Coverage of Homelessness in Hawai‘i**

The amount of media coverage on homelessness in Hawai‘i is prolific. Whereas other media analyses have found 200–300 of articles related to homelessness over several years across different sources, this study detected almost 3,500 articles related to homelessness in just one local news source. While media coverage of homelessness comprised only 4% of all news articles in the *Star-Advertiser* from 2012–2017, articles related to homelessness appeared almost daily during this time period. The amount of this coverage fluctuated over time, spiking in 2015, which also saw a spike in the numbers of persons counted in the annual point-in-time count O‘ahu (BTGPIC, 2018). While the fluctuation in media coverage does not necessarily reflect the number of homeless persons (Buck et al., 2004), this parallel suggests that the local media in Honolulu, at least in part, is responding to *perceived* changes in homeless numbers. Indeed, the media analysis revealed that local media presented homelessness in Hawai‘i as a “crisis” or “disaster.”

In addition to fluctuations in number of news items, the content of these items fluctuated in systematic ways over time. For example, much of the coverage in 2012 and 2013 referred to “homeless people” committing crimes, with the “homeless” label often used as a character description in a crime report (e.g., “Homeless man arrested on suspicion of theft.”). In-depth articles on homelessness as a social issue were rare, and causes and solutions to homelessness were rarely discussed in these earlier years. As the years progressed, coverage became more

complex, with increased numbers of articles delving into a myriad of causes and solutions. For example, prior to the implementation of "sweeps" and "sit-lie" laws in 2015, articles rarely discussed where people would go after being "swept," and these articles were almost entirely from the perspective of policymakers and business leaders. However, after these policies were implemented in 2015, articles began covering the need for more shelters and programs to house displaced people. Additionally, media coverage referred to these policies more negatively over time, particularly in connection with the emergence of unintended consequences (e.g., the movement of encampments from public parks and sidewalks to residential areas where the laws did not apply). This more complex approach to reporting on homelessness led to more critical coverage of current policies over time. Similar to previous literature (Lee et al., 1991), current policies and their inadequacy were mentioned frequently in local media, particularly in the 2015 and 2016 news coverage.

In addition to increased negative coverage of current policies, analysis showed an increase in media coverage of the cost associated with these policies and programs. This increase in discussion of solutions' cost may indicate the presence of "compassion fatigue" that has been noted by other scholars (Link et al., 2010). However, it also may reflect frustration over the perceived ineffectiveness of these solutions. Media coverage in the later years implied that community members were frustrated over the amount of money spent for perceived small reductions in the number of homeless persons. This coverage also showed an increased recognition of the complexity of homelessness and the need for multiple types of solutions, which is in line with findings from other researchers (Buck et al., 2004). In other words, this coverage likely reflected a concern about cost-effectiveness rather than compassion fatigue.

Similar to previous work (Lee et al., 1991; Lind &Danowski, 1999), this study found that the majority of news items in the this study did not refer explicitly to causes (although causes were sometimes implied through suggested solutions), but when causes were mentioned implicitly or explicitly, they were most likely to be structural causes—in particular, the lack of affordable housing in Hawai‘i. This result is in line with more recent findings that print news items rarely refer to causes, but when they do, they tend to focus on structural causes (Truong, 2012). However, individual-level causes also were mentioned quite often. For example, 49% of references to causes mentioned micro-level causes (compared to 58% referring to macro-level causes). The most common micro-level cause mentioned in media narratives was individual choice, followed by drug and alcohol abuse. An additional causal narrative included the narrative that many people were homeless because they migrated to Hawai‘i “to be homeless in paradise.” One article even suggested that 50 new homeless people arrive monthly to the islands (Meyer, 2015). This common myth is found in many cities (Greenstone, 2018; Kinney, 2013) and is especially salient in Hawai‘i, where distinctions between “local” and foreigner are commonly evoked. Notably, several later articles rejected such claims based on evidence to the contrary (e.g., Nakaso, 2017). This change in narratives suggests that local media narratives are open to revision when the media is presented with credible evidence. This openness to revisions suggests that the media may be a viable outlet for addressing other common misconceptions (e.g., that drug/alcohol abuse is the most common contributor to homelessness).

This media analysis built upon previous studies in some key ways. For example, unlike, previous studies, this study examined news coverage that mentioned homelessness only peripherally. Homelessness as a peripheral narrative in an otherwise unrelated news article made up 35% of the examined news items. One common story in which homelessness featured as a

peripheral narrative included stories on crime and disorder. For example, stories about wildfires, vandalized public spaces, or polluted streams often mentioned the proximity of a homeless encampment or person with no reason given for making this statement. The assumption that homelessness is related to crime and disorder was reinforced uncritically.

In addition to crime and disorder narratives, homelessness made an appearance in articles covering many different topics, from Pokemon Go to Syrian refugees. In these instances, homelessness was often used to make a larger political point. For example, one story on the Syrian refugee crisis quoted Senator Sam Slom:

> "Hawaii is having a more and more difficult time taking care of the needs of residents, and we are overwhelmed with the cost of homeless and the services we are giving them," he said… "Where is the additional money going to come from to take care of the so-called Syrian refugees?"

The story went on to confirm that narrative by adding:

> "Hawaii ranks highest in the nation when it comes to the number of homeless per capita, according to federal statistics. Ige and county officials have been struggling to find adequate housing and shelter space to accommodate the growing number of people living on the streets" (Cocke, 2015).

While this story only briefly mentioned homelessness, this type of narrative was common and pervasive in many news articles. As one letter to the editor mentioned when arguing against the state welcoming refugees: "Our aloha spirit should be prioritized toward our own needy citizens" (Stenberg, 2015). The ways in which homelessness was used peripherally as a political tool of sorts is concerning considering the potential ramifications. Using homelessness as a political tool to argue against another unrelated issue could lead to unnecessary competition among citizens with the least amount of power in our society and to animosity toward these groups. These narratives also reinforced narratives of "the homeless" and other marginalized groups as "taking' from the implied real citizens. Regardless, this study demonstrated that examining peripheral

media coverage of homelessness is crucial to fully understanding local narratives on homelessness because these narratives potentially have impacts on the public's opinion and can have ramifications for already-vulnerable groups.

Importantly, this study demonstrated that people experiencing homelessness were rarely given a voice in local media coverage of the issue in Honolulu. This finding is in line with more recent media analyses. While early studies showed that the media sources tended to "put a face to homelessness," highlighting individual stories and quoting homeless persons frequently (Lee, Link, & Toro, 1991), later research has shown that people actually experiencing homelessness were rarely given a voice in the news coverage about them (Min 1999; Shields, 2001). Similarly, media coverage that "put a face to homelessness" was quite rare in this sample. The stories that did take this approach, while sympathetic, often portrayed people experiencing homelessness as needy victims. These "sympathetic" narratives also focused disproportionately on mental health, HIV, and drug addiction issues among "the homeless." Direct quotes from persons experiencing homelessness were rare, and when they were given, often these quotes fit the "needy victim" narrative. This finding is similar to other more recent media studies finding that "the homeless" must fit this narrative if they are allowed to speak (Hodgetts et al., 2005; Shields, 2001). However, one exception in an investigative piece is particularly telling. In response to recent closures of public parks:

> "[A man experiencing homelessness] said, "It's kind of strange they pick on people who have no food, no money. We're trying to survive and they make us look like animals.' 'If they can build a rail with $5.5 billion, why they cannot build a facility to house the homeless?' he asked" (Fujimori, 2013).

Interestingly, in this quote, a person experiencing homelessness is using another controversial topic (the local light rail) to make a political point—that other more powerful players, like Senator Slom, had used.

Finally, this exploratory media analysis revealed that local media coverage of homelessness in Hawai‘i emphasized structural-level causes and solutions, while simultaneously relying on stereotypes and stigmatizing characteristics. Homeless persons were often characterized as threats, as "taking" from the implied real citizens, and as associated with crime and disorder. However, media coverage of homelessness became more complex over time and was open to revision based on new information. These findings support previous literature as well as indicate that media coverage is at times complex and contradictory, which suggests impacts on attitudes and beliefs will also be complex. This study also revealed the importance of including narratives that refer to homelessness only peripherally in media analysis, particularly given that these narratives were highly endorsed in study two.

**Research Question Two: Community Attitudes, Beliefs, and Media Exposure/Endorsement**

Participants indicated that of all the media narratives, they were most familiar with narratives related to problem severity in Honolulu. While severity narratives only comprised 25% of media narratives, the headline representing this narrative received the highest ratings of both exposure and endorsement. The fact that this narrative often made an appearance as a peripheral narrative suggests that it was a particularly powerful narrative. Perhaps its location as a peripheral narrative actually increased exposure by reaching readers who otherwise might not be attracted to media coverage of homelessness.

Similar to narrative exposure, narrative endorsement was highest for narratives related to the severity of the problem and solutions for solving it and was lowest for positive narratives referring to success of housing programs or homeless persons helping others. Endorsement roughly mirrored the extent to which participants had been exposed to these narratives. In other words, participants tended to rate endorsement and exposure to narratives in the same order (see

Figure 12). An exception included the headline: “State should spend less money on new projects, fix problems with homeless first,” which was meant to represent a common peripheral narrative using homelessness to make a political point. While only 14% of participants ($n$ = 51) reported reading similar stories, 40% of participants ($n$ = 140) felt this headline was an accurate representation of the situation in Honolulu. This finding suggests that most participants believed homelessness should take top priority in state government agenda and again, demonstrates that peripheral narratives can carry as much impact as central narratives.

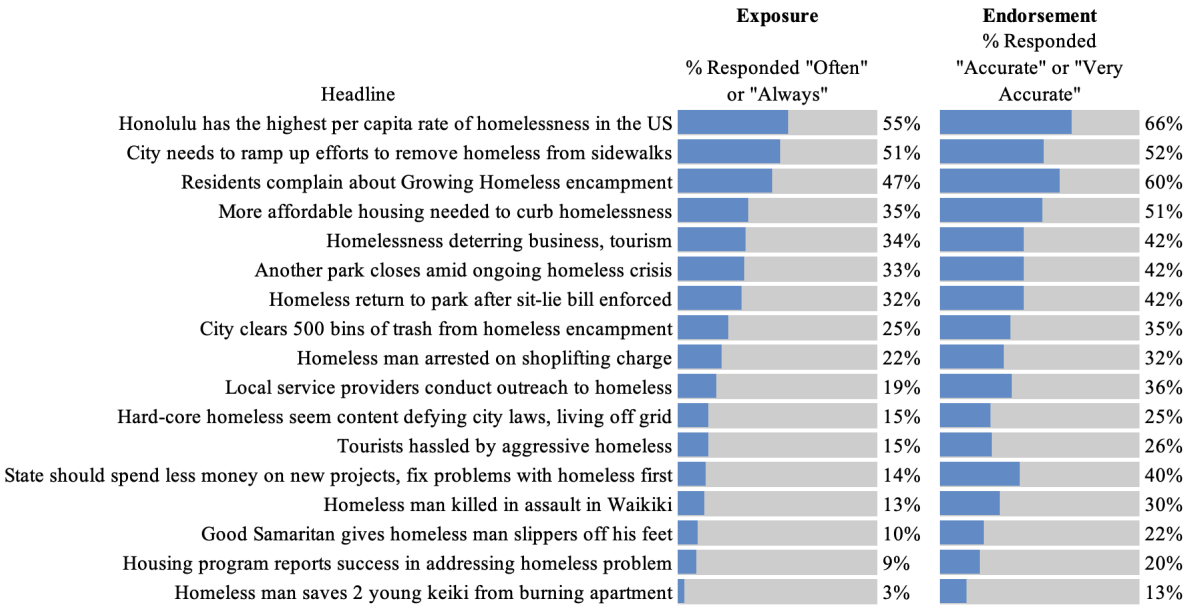


*Figure 12.* Exposure to and endorsement of media narratives by headline.

**Beliefs.** Despite the media’s focus on structural-level causes, a high percentage of participants endorsed micro-level factors as contributing to local homelessness. This finding is in line with more recent public opinion studies that have found a shift in attributions of cause to individual deficits (Gallup, 2007; Tompsett et al., 2006). However, a large percentage of participants also endorsed systemic and contextual factors as contributing to local homelessness. For example, the majority of participants in this study indicated that high cost of living, high rents, and lack of affordable housing were contributing factors to homelessness. This finding is

likely because of the fact that this study asked specifically about homelessness in the local context of Honolulu, which is characterized by these factors. Similar to previous findings that most people hold multiple causal beliefs simultaneously (Lee et al., 1990; Phillips, 2015), this study found that participants endorsed a variety of structural-level and individual-level factors. In fact, the average number of factors that participants indicated were "Probably" or "Definitely Likely" to contribute to local homelessness was 17.48 ($SD$ = 6.10), and a notable 40% of the sample endorsed both individual-level and systemic-level factors ($n$ = 140).

The fact that drug abuse and mental illness were some of the most commonly-endorsed causes is in line with extant research (Gallup, 2007; Phillips, 2015; Tompsett et al., 2006; Toro & McDonnell, 1992). These beliefs are in contrast to actual estimates of mental illness and drug abuse in homeless populations. Estimated prevalence of mental illness in the homeless is between 18% and 22% (Draine et al., 2002; Tessler & Dennis, 1992), and similarly, drug abuse prevalence has been estimated to be 26% of the homeless population (SAMSA, 2003). While both estimates are much higher than drug abuse and mental illness rates in the general population, these estimates also suggest that the majority of the homeless population is not experiencing substance abuse or mental illness. Toro and McDonnell (1992) also found that participants tended to overestimate drug abuse in their study in the early 1990s. Interestingly, when persons experiencing homelessness themselves are asked about factors contributing to homelessness, the majority cite job loss (Barile et al., 2018). This discrepancy points to an area in which community psychologists and homelessness experts might intervene by using media to educate the community and combat these misconceptions.

In line with these commonly-endorsed causes, the most commonly-endorsed solutions to the problem included individual-level solutions like mental health and substance abuse treatment,

followed by low-cost apartments and residential programs. Thus, a large percentage of participants listed individual-level and societal-level solutions to be effective for addressing homelessness in Honolulu. While some national public opinion research has shown that people are more likely to endorse structural-level solutions to homelessness (Lee et al., 2010), this study found that participants endorsed a variety of solutions that targeted multiple levels. Notably, the solutions that received the least endorsement included "sweeps" and laws that criminalize homelessness. This finding has implications for local policy in that it suggests that Honolulu residents may not believe these practices to be effective. This potentially negative public opinion combined with the cost of implementing such practices (Blair, 2016) and the lack of scientific evidence for their effectiveness (Cooter, Meanor, Soli, & Selbin, 2012) may provide an impetus for local policymakers to forgo such traumatizing practices (Darrah-Okike, Soakai, Nakaoka, Dunson-Strane, & Umemoto, 2018; Dunson-Strane & Soakai, 2015).

**Attitudes.** This study found that at a local level, Honolulu community members' attitudes were somewhat positive toward persons experiencing homelessness. These findings partially support national-level public opinion research that found that the public is generally sympathetic toward "the homeless" (Benedict, 1988; Lee et al. 1990, 1991; Toro & McDonnell, 1992). For example, the sample average on the *ATHI* was just to the positive side of the neutral response (4.33 out 7). Additionally, participants were more likely to believe that homelessness was causes by structural factors, to believe that viable solutions exists, and to be willing to affiliate with a person experiencing homelessness. However, they were also more likely to believe that homelessness is caused by personal factors. Given the fact that a combination of structural-level and individual-level factors were endorsed as causes of homelessness, higher scores on this subscale may reflect the participants' more complex understanding of contributing factors to

homelessness as opposed to indicating less positive attitudes. Emotional responsiveness was also slightly to the positive side of the neutral response (4.85 out of 7). Notably, stigma was low when measured using the social distance measure, with most participants indicating that they would be "Probably Willing" to engage with persons experiencing homelessness in a variety of ways. Notably, 80% of participants ($n$ = 283) were willing to have a homeless person work in a school in their community if they had the proper qualifications.

Importantly, this study asked participants about homeless people in their community and not "the homeless" in the abstract. While previous research has suggested that general attitudes were more sympathetic than specific attitudes (Benedict et al., 1988), the sample for the most part had moderately positive attitudes. Therefore, the low social distance finding was even more impressive. For example, the stakes are higher for participants when asked about associating with a homeless person in their community than when asked about a hypothetical person who poses no threat. This finding of low social distance suggests that community members may be open to community integration strategies that seek to reintegrate formerly homeless persons into the community. For example, housing programs like Housing First that encourage scattered-site placements, often focus on community re-integration for clients, and researchers have emphasized the importance of this process for client recovery (Yanos, Barrow, & Tsemberis, 2004). This finding may be informative for local Housing First programs and other similar programs working to reintegrate clients into the community. Importantly, this study also found that perceived dangerousness was somewhat high, with the sample average falling slightly to the less positive side of neutral (3.14 out of 5). Additionally, thirty-six percent (36%, $n$ = 127) of participants thought the homeless persons in their community "Probably" or "Definitely" were dangerous to be around, and 42% believed that the police should watch homeless persons

carefully ($n$ = 148). Thus, interventions would likely need to target misconceptions about dangerousness to encourage successful community integration of formerly homeless persons.

Overall, this study suggests that participants had nuanced views and attitudes about homelessness, endorsing both individual-level and systemic-level factors and supporting a myriad of solutions to address the problem. Additionally, like other studies, this study demonstrated that participants simultaneously recognized the complexity of the issue and felt compassion while still relying on stigmatizing stereotypes of homeless persons as mentally ill, drug addicted, and dangerous.

**Research Question Three: Differences in Attitudes, Beliefs, and Narrative Endorsement**

This study also investigated if participants' attitudes, beliefs, and media narrative endorsement differed in key ways by stakeholder group membership. Unfortunately, few studies have examined group differences in attitudes toward and beliefs about "the homeless." This study suggests that such an investigation would be worthwhile as meaningful group differences were found among groups with different stakes in the issue. Overall, college students seemed to have the most negative attitudes, while service providers had the most positive attitudes. This finding is somewhat surprising given previous findings that younger people tend to be more sympathetic and to endorse structural-level over individual-level causes (Toro & McDonnell, 1992). However, this finding may be explained by the fact that college students reported less contact with persons experiencing homelessness than all the other groups, and contact predicted more positive attitudes and less endorsement of punitive solutions to the problem. Additionally, BCG leaders were more likely than service providers to endorse punitive solutions, like sweeps and laws criminalizing homelessness. This finding may be explained, in part, by service providers' in-depth knowledge about the problem as well as their higher levels of contact with

people experiencing homelessness. Additionally, business and community leaders might be more likely to endorse more punitive solutions because these solutions typically target public and business areas and often were enacted in response to community member and business owner complaints. Thus, while these solutions may not be the most effective solutions, they work to lessen the problem's effect on this group. These findings suggest the need for additional research on group differences as well as have implications for intervention strategies tailored to specific groups to reduce misconceptions and stigma toward persons experiencing homelessness.

**Research Question Four: Associations between Media, Attitudes, and Beliefs**

Overall, media effects were not as strong as predicted by previous work. While some parallels existed, when directly assessed, the link between media impacts and attitudes and beliefs was more complicated. Exposure to negative media coverage of homelessness had the most impact on attitudes and beliefs. Increased exposure to negative media stories was associated with increased belief in individual deficits and limited opportunities as contributing to local homelessness. In turn, these beliefs were associated with increased endorsement of individual-level solutions and basic services. Negative media exposure also interacted with previous contact with homeless persons to impact attitude. For example, negative media exposure predicted significantly less positive attitudes but only for participants who had had low contact with persons experiencing homelessness. Thus, it appears that negative media exposure had a stronger effect on attitudes for people who had had low contact with persons experiencing homelessness than people who had had high contact. These findings suggest that contact buffers negative media impacts on attitudes and points to the potentially negative impacts of negative media coverage on public attitudes and beliefs.

The impacts of positive media narratives on homelessness were less strong and less conclusive. Early studies suggested a connection between positive media coverage and positive attitudes and beliefs (Blasi, 2000; Lee et al., 1991). This study showed that positive narratives had less impact on beliefs than negative media. In some models, positive narrative exposure led to decreased endorsement of individual-level solutions but had no significant effect on other beliefs about effective solutions or causes of homelessness. The impact of positive media exposure on attitudes was more complicated. Positive media exposure seemed to have more impact on attitudes for men. For example, men exposed to high levels of positive media had significantly more positive attitudes than men exposed to low levels of positive media, suggesting that positive media exposure has greater impact on men's attitudes than women's attitudes.

In addition to having more impact for men, positive media exposure had more impact for participants with high contact with persons experiencing homelessness. This study found that when participants who had had high contact with persons experiencing homelessness were exposed to high levels of positive media, they had significantly less positive attitudes than when exposed to low levels of positive media. In fact, when exposed to low levels of positive media, participants with high contact had much more positive attitudes than people who had low contact. However, when exposed to high levels of positive media, people with high contact had similar attitudes to people with low contact (see Figure 8). Thus, exposure to positive media led to more positive attitudes for people with low levels of contact but led to less positive attitudes for people with high levels of contact. While this interaction seems counter-intuitive, Iyengar and Kinder (1987/2010) found that media effects tended to be stronger when they corroborated personal experience. Perhaps previous contact experiences were not in line with the type of

positive narratives presented. For example, the item referring to a homeless man saving two children from a fire may have been too "extreme," such that it did not fit participants' experience with homeless persons. Indeed, few people, housed or not, have saved a life. In other words, this result could also be attributed to a problem with the measure. More research is needed to fully understand this interaction effect of positive media and contact on attitudes.

Another surprising result includes the finding that exposure to narratives about people helping "the homeless" led to *increased* endorsement of punitive policies, such as "sweeps." This finding may be due to an interaction between exposure to different types of media narratives. For example, perhaps continuous exposure to narratives of people helping "the homeless" in addition to continued exposure to coverage on the severity of the problem led to more negative attitudes and endorsement of punitive solutions. In other words, seeing continued efforts to help "the homeless" without evidence of success may lead people to assume that if people cannot find a way out of homelessness with all the perceived help, then those people who are still homeless must be deficient somehow. Another possible explanation for this surprising result includes Iyengar and Kinder's (2010) finding that dramatic sympathetic accounts of individuals affected by social problems like homelessness tended to undermine agenda-setting (e.g., provoking sympathy for the problem) when viewers blamed the victim and to enhance it when they viewed the victims as innocent. In other words, if participants did not view the person being helped as "innocent," they felt less sympathy despite the sympathetic portrayal. Perhaps individual-focused stories of people helping individuals experiencing homelessness led to less empathy/sympathy for participants who did not view the person being helped as innocent. Finally, this finding provides empirical support for Shields' (2001) argument that "do-gooder" narratives do not elicit sympathy as much as they allow for community members to feel as

though something is being done about the problem. This study suggests that such "do-gooder" narratives may actually lead to more negative attitudes and endorsement of punitive solutions.

Other surprising findings include the association between the belief in structural-level causes and endorsement of individual-level solutions and conversely, the positive association between belief in individua-level causes and endorsement of structural-level solutions. For example, belief in individual deficits as a cause of homelessness predicted increased endorsement of individual-level solutions and basic service as expected, but it also predicted increased support of societal-level solutions. Similarly, belief in systemic and contextual factors as causal predicted increased endorsement of systemic-level solutions as anticipated, but these beliefs also predicted increased support of individual-level solutions and basic services. Despite this confusing result, a closer look reveals that beliefs in all types of causes—except for individual fault—were associated with increased endorsement of all types of solutions—except for punitive solutions. On the other hand, belief in individual fault was associated with increased endorsement of *only* punitive solutions and basic services. Therefore, it appears that participants who endorsed all types of causes apart from individual fault were more likely to endorse solutions at all levels; whereas, participants who believed homelessness is the fault of individuals endorsed providing punitive solutions and basic services only. In other words, when participants believed that people became homeless because they chose it or because they were "lazy," they were significantly more likely to support only basic services, at best, and punitive measures, at worse. Participants with other causal beliefs were more likely to endorse a variety of solutions, targeting multiple levels.

Despite finding significant and meaningful associations between attitudes, beliefs, and media, findings for the process of media impacts on endorsed solutions were inconclusive. For

example, while positive attitudes were associated with increased endorsement of societal-level solutions and decreased endorsement of punitive solutions, attitudes did not explain the relationship between media exposure and these endorsed solutions. On the other hand, some causal beliefs did mediate the relationship between media and endorsed solutions. For example, negative media impacts on increased endorsement of individual-level solutions and basic services was mediated by the belief in individual deficits and limited opportunities as causing homelessness. However, the other four possible causal beliefs did not mediate the relationship between any type of media exposure and endorsed solutions. While some beliefs did media the relationships between negative media and solutions, the process of more positive media impacts is less clear. Thus, understanding the *process* of media impacts on beliefs about solutions to homelessness is still unclear.

While mediation effects were largely insignificant, gender, age, and contact proved to be predictors of attitudes and beliefs. In fact, gender and contact were stronger predictors of attitudes and beliefs than media exposure. Like previous research (Toro & McDonnell, 1992), this study found that women were more likely to have more sympathetic attitudes and to attribute causes to structural-level factors. This study also found that increased contact with persons experiencing homelessness was associated with increased positive attitudes, decreased endorsement of punitive solutions, and increased endorsement of all other solutions. This latter finding is in contrast to Knecht and Martinez's (2009) study that showed that increased contact had no change on participants' endorsed solutions. Ultimately, this study confirms previous work finding that contact with persons experiencing homelessness can lead to more positive attitudes as well as showed the potential for contact to buffer the effects of negative media. These findings

point to the possibility of interventions that work to improve attitudes and decrease stigma by increasing contact as well as working with the media to reframe negative media narratives.

**Limitations**

Despite these revealing findings, this study suffers from the limitations typical of observational research designs, namely that causation cannot be inferred. Additionally, because all variables were measured simultaneously, directionality cannot be determined. For example, people with certain attitudes and beliefs may be drawn to certain types of media narratives. The collapsing of variables also may have obscured important variance. While these variables were collapsed based on statistical and theoretical reasoning, other meaningful groupings may have led to different results. Another limitation includes the disproportionate amount of college students in this sample. Despite attempts to recruit community members from specific groups, because of the large number of college students compared to other groups, the sample reflected more of a convenience sample than a purposive sample. Also, selection bias also cannot be dismissed. For example, people who had an interest in homelessness may have been more likely to select to participate in a study on homelessness. Thus, this sample likely varies in systematic ways, and findings cannot be generalized to the entire community. However, this limitation could also be a strength in that people with an interest in the issue may be those individuals who are the most involved in addressing the issue. Thus, understanding their attitudes and beliefs can be useful for intervention development.

Perhaps most glaring, this study does not include persons experiencing homelessness in its sample. While a significant portion of the sample indicated experiences with precarious housing, only one participant was currently experiencing homelessness at the time of the survey. Future research might examine differential media impacts based on current housing status.

Finally, the media is just one of many conveyors and creators of dominant cultural narratives. Other sources and narratives about homelessness may have greater impact on attitudes and beliefs (e.g., religious narratives, political narratives). Also, other forms of media should be explored, including social media, television, broadcast news, and films. Additionally, media narratives are not necessarily mutually exclusive and likely interact to impact attitudes and beliefs. Future research might examine the interaction and impact of dominant culture narratives distributed through other outlets.

# Chapter 8. Future Directions and Conclusions

## Research

These findings have implications for future research and practice, particularly local policy and intervention. As one of the first studies of its kind examining media impacts on attitudes and beliefs about homelessness, this study suggests the need for continued examination of media in other locales, particularly other cities significantly impacted by homelessness. Additionally, future research might examine if overall amount of media exposure—as opposed to just media coverage of homelessness—might be associated with attitudes and beliefs about homelessness. Notably, 30% of the sample reported rarely reading about homelessness in the local news. However, this study did not ask participants how much media they consumed or what type of media they used most. It is possible that overall media consumption may play a role in media impacts such that people exposed to more media may have more narratives vying for their attention leading to less impact. Additional fruitful directions for research include examining patterns of beliefs about causes and solutions to examine if exposure to different media narratives predicts different patterns of beliefs.

Finally, this study suggests that sympathetic media coverage may be associated with more negative attitudes and beliefs. Much more research is needed to understand this relationship given its implications for media interventions that encourage more positive narratives in order to increase public sympathy. In particular, future research might examine what "positive" or "sympathetic" narratives look like to different people and what function these narratives serve and for whom. Importantly, people experiencing homelessness may view "sympathetic" narratives differently than housed residents. Thus, future research should include these individuals. Additionally, future studies should examine the impacts of media coverage of

homelessness on people currently experiencing homelessness. These narratives may have more impact on people actually experiencing homelessness. For example, future research might examine if homeless persons' perceived stigma is associated with media representations. Another potential avenue would be to examine if housing status interacts with media impacts. For example, we might examine if media coverage of homelessness has different impacts for the renters, home owners, multi-family dwelling residents, group home residents, and others.

As we move toward more community-based housing programs, like Housing First, it is imperative that community researchers understand how communities feel about and may react to reintegration of homeless persons (Phillips, 2015). Unfortunately, research suggests that these persons are still highly stigmatized (Pruitt et al., 2018). Public sympathy for "the homeless" has little effect for people who are actually experiencing homelessness if this sympathy does not translate into policy and reduced stigma in everyday interactions with people and social institutions. Much more research is needed in order to understand how attitudes and beliefs can impact stigma at an interpersonal level as well as how they may impact beliefs about policy solutions.

**Practice**

In addition to informing future research, this study's findings can be used to inform local policies and interventions that educate the community on homelessness. For example, this work can be used to inform policymakers. In particular, dissemination of results that show the potentially negative public opinion on punitive measures like "sweeps" combined with evidence demonstrating their ineffectiveness and cost may convince them to end these harmful practices. Potential interventions locally might include community education efforts that counter stereotypes of the homeless as dangerous and beliefs that homelessness is caused by individual

deficits and faults. For example, the results from this study might be disseminated to local law enforcement, neighborhood boards, and faith groups. Additionally, presenting evidence to these groups demonstrating that persons experiencing homelessness are more likely to be the victims of violence than the perpetrators may help combat misconceptions about dangerousness. Also, education efforts might include showing these groups research demonstrating that most persons experiencing homelessness are not experiencing mental illness and drug abuse. Importantly, persons currently experiencing homelessness or who have previously experienced homelessness should be involved in these community education efforts (Pruitt et al., 2018).

Another potential way to increase education on homelessness is by working with media. This study suggests that the local media is open to new narratives when presented with new information. Hodgetts, Stolte, Chamberlain, Radley, Nikora, Nabalarua, and Groot's (2008) work offers some guidelines for doing this work. They worked with media in Auckland to frame homelessness in a way that homeless people were seen as citizens deserving of social inclusion. In particular, they worked with media on a specific issue – homeless access to the library. Additionally, Greenberg, May, and Elliott (2006) provide specific instructions to social service providers and organizations on how to influence media in an effort to promote social change. They argued that organization should use a "framing package" (Ryan 1991) that involves diagnosing the problem, prognosis of the problem, and motivating individuals to engage in collective action. Community psychology is well-poised to assist in each of these steps. In this particular context, we might work with local nonprofit groups to develop framing packages aimed at educating the community through the media. For example, similar to "safe reporting" practices for suicide, community psychologists might develop a list of recommendations for how

to report responsibly and accurately on homelessness.[5] One such recommendation could include the responsibility of the media to include the voices of those experiencing homelessness in a way that affords these individuals power and agency and to seek out new narratives that cast people experiencing homelessness in the role of citizen.

This study suggests another possible opportunity for intervention: college students. While only a small proportion of the general population, participants in this group had the most negative attitudes and beliefs about homelessness and were most likely to endorse negative narratives. Thus, targeting this group, in particular, may lead to a reduction in stigmatizing attitudes in the community. College students are relatively easy to access and educational campaigns on campus could be a step in the right direction. Additionally, having members of houseless communities as guest speakers in college courses could work to dispel stereotypes and combat stigma.

**Conclusion**

This study addressed key limitations in existing research on media and public opinion about homelessness—namely investigating the suggested link between media, attitudes, and beliefs and contextualizing this work within the Honolulu community. This study found that exposure to negative media narratives had the most impact on endorsed solutions to homelessness, predicting increased endorsement of basic services and individual-level solutions, while positive media coverage had less conclusive effects. Additionally, contrary to previous suggestions that sympathetic media was associated with sympathetic public attitude, this study found that exposure to "sympathetic" media coverage was associated with more negative attitudes and beliefs. Ultimately, this study demonstrates the complex relationship between

[5] For examples of safe reporting, see http://reportingonsuicide.org

media and attitudes toward and beliefs about homelessness that emerges when research is situated within a community significantly impacted by this most abject form of poverty.

**Appendix A. Study One Codebook**

| Nodes | Description |
|---|---|
| **Contradiction** | Used to indicate that a plot is being questioned or challenged. (e.g., an article discussing "sit-lie" law in a negative way or as ineffective). |
| **Plots** | Characterizes the main and subplots of each news story. Only use this Parent node if the plot does not fit into any of the sub-nodes below. |
| **Crime Narratives** | Plots related to crime (includes police reports that don't necessarily describe criminal activities; e.g., unidentified bodies). Only use this node if the plot does not fit into any of the sub-nodes below. |
| *Homeless on Homeless Crime* | Plots that describe homeless persons committing crimes against other homeless persons |
| *Perpetrators of Crime* | Plot describes homeless person(s) as perpetrator of a crime, either an actual description of a crime or suggesting a homeless person might be responsible |
| *Unidentified Bodies* | Plots that describe unidentified bodies as being a homeless man or woman |
| *Victims of Crime* | Plot describes homeless person(s) as victim of a crime |
| *Violent Crime* | Plot describes violent crime. Only use this node if the plot does not fit any of the sub-nodes below. |
| Homeless on Homeless Violent Crime | Plot describes a homeless person(s) committing a violent crime against another homeless person(s) |
| Perpetrators of Violence | Plot describes homeless person(s) as perpetrator of a violent crime or act of violence |
| Victims of Violence | Plot describes homeless person(s) as victim of a violent crime |
| **Health** | Plots whose them relate to health. Only use this node if the plot does not fit into any of the sub-nodes below. |
| *Poor Health* | Plot describes the homeless or homeless person as experiencing health issues |

| Nodes | Description |
|---|---|
| *Threat to Public Health* | Plot presents the homeless or homeless people as a threat to public health or refers to homelessness as a public health crisis. |
| **Homeless perspective** | Plot is presented from the perspective of the homeless or homeless person or sub-plot contains reflection from a homeless person. Could also refer perspective of the homeless generally as given through a third party (e.g., case manager or outreach worker). |
| **Homelessness as Dangerous** | Describes homeless people getting injured, sick, etc. |
| **Local Culture** | Refers to "local culture" or Native Hawaiian culture, practices or values. Do not code for this node. Use only nodes below. |
| *Against Local Culture* | Homelessness or homeless people as against the values of local or Native Hawaiian culture (e.g., not showing aloha) |
| *Threat to Local Culture* | Homelessness or homeless people as a threat to local or Native Hawaiian culture (e.g., homeless desecrating heiau) |
| **Nuisance** | Homeless as nuisance to everyday activities of "the public" or implied real citizens. |
| *Homeless as Taking* | Homeless people as “taking” from “the public” (e.g., taking parks and sidewalks) |
| **Peripheral Narrative** | Homelessness or people are not part of the main narrative. For this node, code entire text of the article if the article’s main plot is not about homelessness. |
| **Service & Philanthropy Narratives** | Plot revolves around service or philanthropy. Only use this node if the plot does not fit into any of the sub-nodes below. |
| *Homeless Helping Others* | Plot describes homeless persons helping other people or other homeless people |
| *People Helping Homeless* | Plot describes service or philanthropy projects that help the homeless. Also used when programs are described as helping the homeless or specific homeless people). |

| Nodes | Description |
|---|---|
| **The Homeless Problem** | Plots that relate to the homeless problem. Only use this Parent node if the plot does not fit into any of the sub-nodes below. |
| *Causes* | Plots or minor plots that explicitly or implicitly refer to causes of homelessness. Only use this node if the plot does not fit into any of the sub-nodes below. |
| Macro | Plots or minor plots that refer to macro-level causes of homelessness. Only use this node if the plot does not fit into any of the sub-nodes below. |
| *High Cost Living* | Plots or minor plots that imply or assert that high cost of living causes homelessness. |
| *Inefficient Governance* | Plots or minor plots that imply or assert that inefficient governance or government leaders as the cause of homelessness. |
| *Lack of Affordable Housing* | Plots or minor plots that imply or assert that lack of affordable housing causes homelessness. |
| *Lack of Jobs* | Plots or minor plots that imply or assert that homelessness is caused by lack of jobs. |
| *Low Wages* | Plots or minor plots that imply or assert that homelessness is caused by low wages or lack of minimum wage increase. |
| *Poverty* | Plots or minor plots that imply or assert that poverty or wealth disparity is the cause of homelessness. |
| *Tourism* | Plots or minor plots that imply or assert tourism is a cause of homelessness. |
| Vacation Rentals | Plots or minor plots that imply or assert that vacation rentals are a cause of homelessness through the reduction in affordable housing. |
| Mainland Migration | Plots or minor plots that imply or assert that homelessness in Hawaii is caused by other states shipping their homeless to Hawaii or by people moving to Hawaii to be homeless. Can also refer to COFA immigrants from Micronesia. |
| Micro | Plots or minor plots that imply or assert that micro-level factors (often individual deficits) are a cause of homelessness. Only use this node if the plot does not fit into any of the sub-nodes below. |

| Nodes | Description |
|---|---|
| *Choice* | Plots or minor plots that imply or assert that homelessness is caused by people choosing to be homeless or making bad choices that lead to homelessness. |
| *Disability* | Plots or minor plots that imply or assert that disability (often related to Vets, PTSD, or the elderly) is a cause of homelessness. |
| *Drug Alcohol* | Plots or minor plots that imply or assert that drug and/or alcohol use is a cause of homelessness. |
| *Job Loss* | Plots or minor plots that imply or assert that loss of a job is a cause of homelessness. |
| *Laziness* | Plots or minor plots that imply or assert that laziness is a cause of homelessness. Often overlaps with choice node above. |
| *Mental Illness* | Plots or minor plots that imply or assert that mental illness is a cause of homelessness. |
| Trauma | Plots or minor plots that imply or assert that trauma (e.g., domestic violence, child abuse, rape, etc.) is a cause of homelessness. |
| *Cost* | Plots that discuss the cost of fixing the homeless problem. Often associated with cost of programs or of sweeps. |
| *Effects* | Plots that discuss the effects of homelessness on “the public” (e.g., effects on tourism, neighborhoods, etc.) or for homeless persons (e.g., deteriorating health). |
| *Severity* | Plots that describe the severity of the homeless problem (e.g., “Honolulu has the highest per capita rate of homelessness”). |
| Complex | Plots that describe the homeless problem as complex and not easily solved. |
| Crisis Disaster | Plots that refer to the homeless problem as a "crisis" or using disaster language. |
| Intractable | Plots that describe the homeless problem as intractable or unsolvable. Slow moving. |
| Out of Control | Plots that describe the homeless problem as “out of control”, “mushrooming”, “taking over”, etc. |

| Nodes | Description |
|---|---|
| *Solutions* | Plots that discuss or suggest solutions to the homeless problem. Only use this node if the plot does not fit into any of the sub-nodes below. |
| Affordable Housing | Plots that discuss affordable housing as a solution to homelessness. |
| Housing Programs | Plots that discuss housing programs as a solution to the homeless problem. |
| *Housing First* | Plots that discuss permanent supportive housing (e.g., Housing First) as a solution to homelessness. |
| *Rental Assistance* | Plots that discuss rental assistance as a solution to the homeless problem. |
| *Sec 8* | Plots that discuss Section 8 housing, public housing, or other voucher programs as a solution to the homeless problem. |
| *Tiny Houses* | Plots that discuss tiny houses, igloos, or shipping containers as a solution to the homeless problem. |
| Hygiene Centers | Plots that discuss hygiene centers (or "urban centers) or more public facilities as a solution to the homeless problem. |
| Legislation | Plots that discuss laws or legislation as a solution to the problem (e.g., “sit-lie” bill, bills allowing city to confiscate private property on public lands). Can also refer to bills or legislation that appropriate money to programs. |
| Safe Zones | Plots that discuss safe zones or government sanctioned tent cities as solutions to homelessness. |
| Sand Island | Plots that discuss Sand Island (Hale Mauliola) as a solution to the homeless problem. |
| Shelters | Plots that discuss shelters as a solution to the homeless problem. |
| Social Services | Plots that discuss social services as a solution to the homeless problem. |
| *Employment* | Plots that discuss employment social services as a solution to the homeless problem. |
| *Mental Health* | Plots that discuss mental health services or institutionalization as a solution to the homeless problem. |

| Nodes | Description |
|---|---|
| *Substance Abuse Treatment* | Plots that describe substance abuse treatment services as a solution to the homeless problem. |
| Sweeps | Plots that discuss homeless encampment sweeps as a solution to the problem. |
| Tourism | Plots that discuss tourism as a solution to the homeless problem (e.g., tourism bringing more money to the state to be used to address homelessness). |
| **Threat to Public Safety** | Plots that imply or assert that homeless persons are a threat to public safety. Don't code to this node. Use the sub-nodes below. |
| *General threat* | Plots that imply or assert that homeless persons are a threat to public safety. |
| *Sidewalk obstacle* | Plots that imply or assert that homeless persons and encampments are sidewalk obstacles. |
| **Threats to Economy** | Plots that imply or assert that homelessness is a threat to the local economy. Don't code to this node. Use the sub-nodes below. |
| *Burden to tax payers* | Plots that imply or assert that homelessness is a burden to tax payers. |
| *Drain on Economy* | Plots that imply or assert that homelessness is a drain on the economy. |
| *Threat to Businesses* | Plots that imply or assert that homelessness is a threat to local business (small business or larger corporations). |
| *Threat to Tourism* | Plots that imply or assert that homelessness is a threat to tourism. |
| **Power** | How plots and narratives are used as a tool by those in power. Don't code to this node. Use the sub-node below only. |
| **Political Tool** | Use of homelessness as a political tool to advance or discredit an opponent or idea (e.g., "the mayor shouldn't be re-elected because he didn't solve homelessness"; "we shouldn't take in refugees because we already have too many homeless"). |

**Appendix B. Study Two Survey Instrument**


**Local Media and Homelessness in Honolulu Survey**

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. We are interested in attitudes and beliefs about homelessness here in Honolulu and in your experience with local media coverage of homelessness. The survey should take 15-20 minutes.

**First, please tell us how you heard about this survey (circle all that apply)?**

Email Card/Flyer SONA Social Media Other: _____

**I. Contributing Factors to Homelessness in Honolulu**. Many factors can contribute to homelessness worldwide. Using the scale below, please indicate how likely the following factors are to contribute to homelessness **in Honolulu**.

| | Definitely Unlikely | Probably Unlikely | Neither Likely nor Unlikely | Probably Likely | Definitely Likely |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Poor economic conditions | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. Having a mental illness | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. Having a problem with illicit drugs | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. Limited availability of jobs | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. Having a problem with alcohol | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. Social inequality for different groups of people | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. Being lazy | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. Having limited education or training | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. Having a physical illness | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. Limited affordable housing | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 11. Not working hard enough to earn income | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. Lack of affordable healthcare | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13. Having limited opportunities in life | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14. Decline in public assistance | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15. Growing up in a home with limited income | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 16. High rent rates | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 17. Overall high cost of living (e.g., groceries, transportation, housing, etc.) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 18. Domestic violence | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 19. Lack of plan for discharge from hospital, rehab, or prison. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 20. Having a disability | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 21. Relocation | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 22. Divorce | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 23. Death in the family | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 24. Losing disability or Social Security benefits | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 25. Foreclosure | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 26. Eviction | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

**II. Solutions for Homelessness in Honolulu.** We are interested in what policies or solutions could help alleviate homelessness in Honolulu. Please indicate how likely the following factors would be effective in addressing homelessness **in Honolulu**.

| | Definitely Unlikely | Probably Unlikely | Neither Likely nor Unlikely | Probably Likely | Definitely Likely |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Residential programs (e.g., group homes for persons unable to live independently) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. Job training programs | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. Mental health treatment | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. Educational programs | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. Drug and alcohol treatment | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. Low-cost apartment buildings. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. Short-term housing (i.e., transitional housing programs) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. Vouchers for housing (e.g., Sec 8) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. Medical care | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. Outreach services | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11. Shelters for individuals who are homeless | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. “Drop-in centers” where individuals can go during the day to seek help & bathe. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13. Programs providing food for individuals who are homeless (e.g., soup kitchens) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14. Faith-based programs | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15. Housing First programs | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 16. Raising the minimum wage | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 17. Increasing affordable housing stock | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

18. Please list any additional solutions or policies that you think would be effective in addressing homelessness in Honolulu:

_____

**III. Beliefs about the Homeless in Honolulu.** Below are some statements about people who experience homelessness. Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement about people who experience homelessness here **in Honolulu**.

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Homeless people had parents who took little interest in them as children. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 2. Government cutbacks in housing assistance for the poor may have made the homeless problem in this country worse. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 3. The low minimum wage in this country virtually guarantees a large homeless population. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 4. I would feel comfortable eating a meal with a homeless person. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 5. Rehabilitation programs for homeless people are too expensive to operate. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 6. There is little that can be done for people in homeless shelters except to see that they are comfortable and well fed. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 7. Most circumstances of homelessness in adults can be traced to their emotional experiences in childhood. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 8. Most homeless persons are substance abusers. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9. Recent government cutbacks in welfare have contributed substantially to the homeless problem in this country. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 10. I feel uneasy when I meet homeless people. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 11. A homeless person cannot really be expected to adopt a normal lifestyle. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

Please indicate your degree of agreement with the following statements about homeless persons in your community.

| | Definitely No | Probably No | Neither Yes nor No | Probably Yes | Definitely Yes |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Do you think homeless persons in your community are dangerous to be around? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. Do you think homeless persons in your community should be watched closely by the local police? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement about people who experience homelessness here **in Honolulu**.

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Being homeless frees you from many of the worries that other people have about jobs & family. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 2. It is hard to imagine what homeless people do with all the free time they must have. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3. It is hard to understand how anyone becomes homeless. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 4. Most homeless people can be identified by their appearance alone. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 5. Laziness on the part of the homeless themselves contributes to homelessness. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 6. Irresponsible behavior on the part of the homeless contributes to homelessness. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

**IV. Feelings toward the Homeless in Honolulu.** Below are some statements about how you may *feel* towards homeless people. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. When you think about homeless people you feel sad. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 2. It makes you angry to think that so many people are homeless in a country as rich as ours. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 3. You feel less compassion for homeless people than you used to. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 4. Programs for the homeless cost taxpayers too much money. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

**V. Willingness to Interact.** Please indicate how willing you would be to engage in the following actions.

| | Definitely Willing | Probably Willing | Unsure | Probably Unwilling | Definitely Unwilling |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| How willing would you be to hire a homeless person to do odd jobs for you? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| How willing would you be to have a formerly homeless person live in your community? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| How willing would you be to have a homeless person as a close friend? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| How willing would you be to have a homeless person work at your local school, if he had the necessary skills and met background check criteria? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

**VI. Experience with Homeless Persons.** Please select that answer that best describes your experience with homeless persons in Honolulu.

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| How frequently do you see a homeless person in your neighborhood? | Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often | Always |
| How many homeless people do you see in an average week? | None | 1-2 | 3-6 | 7-10 | More than 10 |
| Do you personally know a homeless person? | Yes | No | Unsure | | |
| Have you ever had an extended conversation with someone who is experiencing homelessness? | Yes | No | Unsure | | |
| Please indicate if you have contributed any of the following (circle all that apply): | Donated money to homeless charity | Donated food or clothing to homeless charity | Given money directly to homeless person | Given food, clothing, shelter directly to a homeless person | |

**VII. Experience with Homelessness**. Please select that answer that best describes your experience with homelessness.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Have you ever considered yourself to be homeless (e.g., slept in a park or shelter)? | Yes | No | Unsure |
| Have you ever considered yourself to be precariously housed (e.g., staying with a friend because you had no other place to go)? | Yes | No | Unsure |

**VIII. Local Media Coverage of Homelessness**. For the following sample headlines, please indicate how frequently you have encountered a similar story or headline, either on televised news, online, in the newspaper, or in some other media source **here in Honolulu**. Additionally, please indicate to what extent this headline or similar headline would be an accurate reflection of the situation **in Honolulu**.

## Residents complain about growing homeless encampment

| | Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often | Always |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| How often have you encountered a similar headline or story in the local news (e.g., televised, online, newspaper)? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | Very Inaccurate | | | | Very Accurate |
| To what extent do you think this headline is an accurate reflection of the homeless situation in Honolulu? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

## Homelessness deterring business, tourism

| | Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often | Always |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| How often have you encountered a similar headline or story in the local news (e.g., televised, online, newspaper)? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | Very Inaccurate | | | | Very Accurate |
| To what extent do you think this headline is an accurate reflection of the homeless situation in Honolulu? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

## Good Samaritan gives homeless man boots off his feet

| | Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often | Always |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| How often have you encountered a similar headline or story in the local news (e.g., televised, online, newspaper)? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | Very Inaccurate | | | | Very Accurate |
| To what extent do you think this headline is an accurate reflection of the homeless situation in Honolulu? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

## Another park closes amid ongoing homeless crisis

| | Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often | Always |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| How often have you encountered a similar headline or story in the local news (e.g., televised, online, newspaper)? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | Very Inaccurate | | | | Very Accurate |
| To what extent do you think this headline is an accurate reflection of the homeless situation in Honolulu? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

## Homeless man saves 2 young keiki from burning apartment

| | Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often | Always |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| How often have you encountered a similar headline or story in the local news (e.g., televised, online, newspaper)? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | Very Inaccurate | | | | Very Accurate |
| To what extent do you think this headline is an accurate reflection of the homeless situation in Honolulu? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

## Homeless man arrested on shoplifting charge

| | Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often | Always |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| How often have you encountered a similar headline or story in the local news (e.g., televised, online, newspaper)? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | Very Inaccurate | | | | Very Accurate |
| To what extent do you think this headline is an accurate reflection of the homeless situation in Honolulu? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

## Homeless man killed in assault in Waikiki

| | Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often | Always |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| How often have you encountered a similar headline or story in the local news (e.g., televised, online, newspaper)? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | Very Inaccurate | | | | Very Accurate |
| To what extent do you think this headline is an accurate reflection of the homeless situation in Honolulu? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

## Housing program reports success in addressing homeless problem

| | Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often | Always |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| How often have you encountered a similar headline or story in the local news (e.g., televised, online, newspaper)? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | Very Inaccurate | | | | Very Accurate |
| To what extent do you think this headline is an accurate reflection of the homeless situation in Honolulu? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

## Honolulu has the highest per capita rate of homelessness in US

| | Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often | Always |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| How often have you encountered a similar headline or story in the local news (e.g., televised, online, newspaper)? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | Very Inaccurate | | | | Very Accurate |
| To what extent do you think this headline is an accurate reflection of the homeless situation in Honolulu? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

## City needs to ramp up efforts to remove homeless from sidewalks

| | Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often | Always |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| How often have you encountered a similar headline or story in the local news (e.g., televised, online, newspaper)? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | Very Inaccurate | | | | Very Accurate |
| To what extent do you think this headline is an accurate reflection of the homeless situation in Honolulu? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

## More affordable housing needed to curb homelessness

| | Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often | Always |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| How often have you encountered a similar headline or story in the local news (e.g., televised, online, newspaper)? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | Very Inaccurate | | | | Very Accurate |
| To what extent do you think this headline is an accurate reflection of the homeless situation in Honolulu? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

## Hard-core homeless seem content defying city laws, living off the grid

| | Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often | Always |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| How often have you encountered a similar headline or story in the local news (e.g., televised, online, newspaper)? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | Very Inaccurate | | | | Very Accurate |
| To what extent do you think this headline is an accurate reflection of the homeless situation in Honolulu? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

## City clears 500 bins of trash from homeless encampment

| | Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often | Always |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| How often have you encountered a similar headline or story in the local news (e.g., televised, online, newspaper)? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | Very Inaccurate | | | | Very Accurate |
| To what extent do you think this headline is an accurate reflection of the homeless situation in Honolulu? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

## Tourists hassled by aggressive homeless

| | Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often | Always |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| How often have you encountered a similar headline or story in the local news (e.g., televised, online, newspaper)? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | Very Inaccurate | | | | Very Accurate |
| To what extent do you think this headline is an accurate reflection of the homeless situation in Honolulu? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

## Homeless return to park after sit-lie bill enforced

| | Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often | Always |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| How often have you encountered a similar headline or story in the local news (e.g., televised, online, newspaper)? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | Very Inaccurate | | | | Very Accurate |
| To what extent do you think this headline is an accurate reflection of the homeless situation in Honolulu? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

## Local service providers conduct outreach to homeless

| | Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often | Always |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| How often have you encountered a similar headline or story in the local news (e.g., televised, online, newspaper)? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | Very Inaccurate | | | | Very Accurate |
| To what extent do you think this headline is an accurate reflection of the homeless situation in Honolulu? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

## State should spend less money on new projects, fix problems with the homeless first

| | Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often | Always |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| How often have you encountered a similar headline or story in the local news (e.g., televised, online, newspaper)? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | Very Inaccurate | | | | Very Accurate |
| To what extent do you think this headline is an accurate reflection of the homeless situation in Honolulu? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

**VIII. Background.** We are also interested in some background information about you.

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. What is your age in years? _____ | 2. What is your gender? (circle) Male Female Specify: _____ | | | | | |
| 3. What is the highest grade or year of school you completed? (circle) | 8th grade or less | Completed 9th-11th | Graduated or GED | Some college | College graduate | Graduate School |
| 4. Were you born in Hawai‘i? (circle) Yes No | 4a. If yes, how long have you lived in HI? ___Years ___Months | | | | | |
| 5. What is your ethnic background? (check all that apply) | ___African-American | ___Alaskan Native | ___American Indian | ___Asian Indian | ___Caucasian | |
| | ___Chinese | ___Filipino | ___Hawaiian | ___Hispanic | ___Japanese | |
| | ___Korean | ___Middle Eastern | ___Pacific Islander | ___Portuguese | ___Puerto Rican | |
| | ___ Samoan | ___Unknown | Other (specify) _____ | | | |
| 6. Please select any of the following that apply to you and your role in the community (check all that apply) | ___ Service Provider | ___ County Government | ___ Student | ___ Real Estate | | |
| | ___ City Government | ___ Community Resident | ___ Law Enforcement | ___ Tourism | | |
| | ___ State Government | ___ Business Owner | ___ Neighborhood Board | ___ Other: _____ | | |
| 7. How often do you read articles pertaining to homelessness in Honolulu? | Rarely | 3-4 times a year | 3-4 times a month | 1-2 times a week | Everyday | |

8. Please check in which neighborhood you **live**.

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ____‘Aiea | ____Kāhala | ____Kapolei | ____Mānoa | ____Nu‘uanu | ____Wai‘alae |
| ____Airport | ____Kahalu‘u | ____Kapahulu | ____McCully | ____Pālama | ____Wai‘anae Coast |
| ____Ala Moana | ____Kailua | ____Ko‘olauloa | ____Mililani Mauka | ____Pālolo | ____Waikīkī |
| ____Ālewa | ____Kaimukī | ____Kuli‘ou‘ou | ____Mililani | ____Pearl City | ____Waimānalo |
| ____Āliamanu | ____Kaka‘ako | ____Launani Valley | ____Moanalua | ____Punchbowl | ____Waipahu |
| ____Diamond Head | ____Kalani Iki | ____Liliha | ____Mō‘ili‘ili | ____Salt Lake | ____Waipi‘o |
| ____Downtown | ____Kalihi | ____Mā‘ili | ____Mōkapu | ____St. Louis | ____Whitmore Village |
| ____‘Ewa | ____Kalihi Valley | ____Makakilo | ____Nānākuli | ____Tantalus | Other: |
| ____Hawai‘i Kai | ____Kāne‘ohe | ____Makiki | ____North Shore | ____Wahiawā | _____ |

9. Please check which neighborhood in which you **work** (if applicable):

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ____‘Aiea | ____Kāhala | ____Kapolei | ____Mānoa | ____Nu‘uanu | ____Wai‘alae |
| ____Airport | ____Kahalu‘u | ____Kapahulu | ____McCully | ____Pālama | ____Wai‘anae Coast |
| ____Ala Moana | ____Kailua | ____Ko‘olauloa | ____Mililani Mauka | ____Pālolo | ____Waikīkī |
| ____Ālewa | ____Kaimukī | ____Kuli‘ou‘ou | ____Mililani | ____Pearl City | ____Waimānalo |
| ____Āliamanu | ____Kaka‘ako | ____Launani Valley | ____Moanalua | ____Punchbowl | ____Waipahu |
| ____Diamond Head | ____Kalani Iki | ____Liliha | ____Mō‘ili‘ili | ____Salt Lake | ____Waipi‘o |
| ____Downtown | ____Kalihi | ____Mā‘ili | ____Mōkapu | ____St. Louis | ____Whitmore Village |
| ____‘Ewa | ____Kalihi Valley | ____Makakilo | ____Nānākuli | ____Tantalus | Other: |
| ____Hawai‘i Kai | ____Kāne‘ohe | ____Makiki | ____North Shore | ____Wahiawā | _____ |

## Appendix C. Additional Tables

Table C1

*Means and Standard Deviations for All Attitudes Measures*

| Measure | Subscale | Item | *N* | *M* | *SD* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ATHI | | | | | |
| | Personal Characteristics Causes | Most homeless persons are substance abusers | 342 | 4.38 | 1.72 |
| | | Homeless people had parents who took little interest in them as children | 343 | 4.05 | 1.54 |
| | | Most circumstances of homelessness in adults can be traced to their emotional experiences in childhood | 343 | 4.29 | 1.58 |
| | Societal Causes | The low minimum wage in this country virtually guarantees a large homeless population | 342 | 5.02 | 1.71 |
| | | Government cutbacks in housing assistance for the poor have made homelessness in the US worse | 342 | 5.21 | 1.51 |
| | | Recent government cutbacks in welfare have contributed substantially to homelessness in the US | 343 | 4.87 | 1.49 |
| | Affiliations | I feel uneasy when I meet homeless people | 340 | 4.02 | 1.73 |
| | | I would feel comfortable eating a meal with a homeless person | 341 | 4.35 | 1.64 |
| | Solvable Problem | Little can be done for people in homeless shelters except to see that they are comfortable and well fed | 343 | 3.37 | 1.90 |
| | | Rehabilitation programs for homeless people are too expensive to operate | 343 | 4.32 | 1.69 |
| | | A homeless person cannot really be expected to adopt a normal lifestyle | 341 | 3.23 | 1.78 |
| Emotional Response | | When you think about homeless people you feel sad | 340 | 5.10 | 1.56 |
| | | It makes you angry to think that so many people are homeless in a country as rich as ours | 340 | 5.26 | 1.67 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | You feel less compassion for homeless people than you used to | 339 | 3.45 | 1.76 |
| | | Programs for the homeless cost taxpayers too much money | 339 | 3.49 | 1.77 |
| Lack of Empathy | | Being homeless frees you from many of the worries that other people have about jobs and family | 342 | 2.93 | 1.71 |
| | | It is hard to imagine what homeless people do with all the free time | 341 | 3.57 | 1.92 |
| | | It is hard to understand how anyone becomes homeless | 340 | 2.79 | 1.62 |
| | | Most homeless people can be identified by their appearance alone | 339 | 3.76 | 1.77 |
| | | Laziness on the part of the homeless themselves contributes to homelessness | 339 | 3.84 | 1.92 |
| | | Irresponsible behavior on the part of the homeless contributes to homelessness | 340 | 4.39 | 1.79 |
| Stigma | Social Distance | Willing to hire a homeless person to do odd jobs for you | 339 | 2.58 | 1.03 |
| | | Willing to have a formally homeless person live in your community | 337 | 1.90 | 0.95 |
| | | Willing to have a homeless person as a close friend | 339 | 2.24 | 1.04 |
| | | Willing to have a homeless person work at your local school | 338 | 1.73 | 0.94 |
| | Dangerousness | Do you think homeless people in your community would be dangerous to be around? | 336 | 3.07 | 1.11 |
| | | Do you think homeless persons in your community should be watched closely by the local police? | 336 | 3.22 | 1.15 |

*Note.* ATHI, Lack of Empathy, Emotional Response scored on a scale from 1-7, with 7 indicating higher agreement. Social Distance and Dangerousness score on a scale of 1-5, with 5 indicating higher agreement.

Table C2

*Moderated Mediation: Beliefs in Contextual Factors Mediate Media Impacts on Endorsed Solutions, Moderated by Gender and Contact*

| Cause—Context | SIND | SSOC | SSERV | SPUN |
|---|---|---|---|---|

| | *b* | *p* | *b* | *p* | *b* | *p* | *b* | *p* | *b* | *p* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Age | -.01 | .130 | .00 | .126 | .01 | .059 | .00 | .461 | -.01 | .102 |
| Negative Media | .04 | .647 | .03 | .630 | -.06 | .428 | -.03 | .773 | .20 | .159 |
| Positive Media | -.04 | .755 | -.13 | .052 | .03 | .725 | -.03 | .674 | -.10 | .426 |
| Helping Media | -.17 | .104 | .11 | .106 | .02 | .773 | .15 | .056 | .29 | .019 |
| Gender | -.30 | .004 | -.19 | .017 | -.27 | .003 | -.46 | .000 | -.08 | .608 |
| Contact | .12 | .233 | .03 | .694 | .13 | .113 | -.01 | .914 | -.51 | .001 |
| Neg X Gen | .05 | .797 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Pos X Gen | -.10 | .612 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Help X Gen | .21 | .261 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Neg X Cont | .19 | .200 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Pos X Cont | .04 | .843 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Help X Cont | -.11 | .516 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Cause—Context | -- | -- | .38 | .000 | .52 | .000 | .37 | .000 | -.05 | .677 |

Table C3

*Moderated Mediation: Beliefs in Systemic Factors Mediate Media Impacts on Endorsed Solutions, Moderated by Gender and Contact*

| | Cause—System | | SIND | | SSOC | | SSERV | | SPUN | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *b* | *p* | *b* | *p* | *b* | *p* | *b* | *p* | *b* | *p* |
| Age | -.01 | .033 | .00 | .092 | .01 | .075 | .00 | .584 | -.01 | .101 |
| Negative Media | .18 | .095 | .06 | .344 | -.01 | .865 | .01 | .940 | .19 | .168 |
| Positive Media | .11 | .335 | -.21 | .003 | -.08 | .363 | -.11 | .155 | -.09 | .479 |
| Helping Media | -.12 | .305 | .08 | .213 | -.03 | .693 | .11 | .114 | .30 | .017 |
| Gender | -.49 | .000 | -.15 | .057 | -.24 | .010 | -.43 | .000 | -.08 | .608 |
| Contact | .26 | .011 | -.02 | .821 | .08 | .355 | -.05 | .600 | -.51 | .001 |
| Neg X Gen | .01 | .967 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Pos X Gen | .22 | .206 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Help X Gen | .03 | .864 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Neg X Cont | -.15 | .354 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Pos X Cont | .02 | .877 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Help X Cont | .02 | .905 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Cause—System | -- | -- | .32 | .000 | .39 | .000 | .30 | .000 | -.03 | .740 |

Table C4

*Moderated Mediation: Beliefs in Fate Mediate Media Impacts on Endorsed Solutions, Moderated by Gender and Contact*

| | Cause—Fate | | SIND | | SSOC | | SSERV | | SPUN | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *b* | *p* | *b* | *p* | *b* | *p* | *b* | *p* | *b* | *p* |
| Age | .00 | .384 | .00 | .202 | .00 | .220 | .00 | .353 | -.01 | .112 |
| Negative Media | .20 | .143 | .00 | .950 | -.06 | .453 | -.05 | .533 | .19 | .179 |
| Positive Media | .01 | .927 | -.14 | .027 | .00 | .963 | -.05 | .526 | -.10 | .441 |
| Helping Media | -.03 | .796 | .06 | .285 | -.05 | .483 | .10 | .160 | .30 | .016 |
| Gender | -.42 | .000 | -.13 | .097 | -.27 | .005 | -.41 | .000 | -.06 | .705 |
| Contact | .12 | .241 | .02 | .765 | .14 | .106 | -.02 | .865 | -.52 | .001 |
| Neg X Gen | .16 | .423 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Pos X Gen | -.06 | .756 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Help X Gen | .09 | .610 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Neg X Cont | -.03 | .855 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Pos X Cont | -.02 | .930 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Help X Cont | -.07 | .654 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Cause—Fate | -- | -- | .41 | .000 | .37 | .000 | .39 | .000 | .01 | .902 |

**Appendix D. Study Two Informed Consent Form**

**University of Hawai'i**
**Consent to Participate in a Research Project**
Anna Pruitt, Principal Investigator
*Local Media and Attitudes toward Homelessness and Policy in Honolulu*

Aloha! My name is Anna Pruitt, and I am inviting you to take part in a research study. I am a graduate student at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa in the Department of Psychology. As part of the requirements for earning my graduate degree, I am conducting this research project.

***What am I being asked to do?***
If you participate in this project, you will be asked to fill out a survey.

***Taking part in this study is your choice.***
Your participation in this project is completely voluntary. You may stop participating at any time. If you withdraw from the study, there will be no penalty or loss to you.

***Why is this study being done?***
The purpose of this study is to examine attitudes toward homelessness in Honolulu and the potential impact of media coverage on these attitudes. I am asking you to participate because you may have experience with local media and insight on this local problem.

***What will happen if I decide to take part in this study?***
The survey will that ask about your opinion on causes and possible solutions to homelessness, your feelings and beliefs about homelessness, your interactions and experiences with homeless persons and homelessness, and your experience with local media stories on homelessness. The survey will take about 20-30 minutes. The survey will include questions like, “Please indicate how likely the following factors are to contribute to homelessness in Honolulu.” “Please indicate your level of agreement with the statement: When you think about homeless people, you feel sad.” You will be one of about 300 people whom will be surveyed for this study.

***What are the risks and benefits of taking part in this study?***
I believe there is little risk to you for participating in this research project. You may become stressed or uncomfortable answering any of the survey questions. If you do become stressed or uncomfortable, you can skip the question or take a break. You can also stop taking the survey or you can withdraw from the project altogether. There will be no direct benefit to you for participating in this survey. The results of this research may help us understand the role media plays in attitudes about homelessness and may be useful in understanding the local community’s opinions on homelessness.

***Confidentiality and Privacy:***
I will not ask you for any personal information, such as your name or address. Please do not include any personal information in your survey responses. While we will not collect personal information, it is possible that you may be identifiable based on other responses. To protect confidentiality, I will keep all study data secure on a password-protected computer or in a locked

filing cabinet in a locked office. Only my University of Hawai'i advisor, a trained research assistant, and I will have access to the information. Other agencies that have legal permission have the right to review research records. The University of Hawai'i Human Studies Program has the right to review research records for this study.

**Questions:** If you have any questions about this study, please call or email me at 808.956.6806 & annars@hawaii.edu. You may also contact my faculty advisor, Dr. Jack Barile, at 808.956.6271 & barile@hawaii.edu. You may contact the UH Human Studies Program at 808.956.5007 or uhirb@hawaii.edu to discuss problems, concerns and questions, obtain information, or offer input with an informed individual who is unaffiliated with the specific research protocol. Please visit http://go.hawaii.edu/jRd for more information on your rights as a research participant.

Clicking the arrow below, you consent to participate in this study. If you do not want to participate, simply close your browser.

Please print or save a copy of this page for your reference.

Mahalo!

## Appendix E. IRB Approval

UNIVERSITY of HAWAI'I® SYSTEM

**Office of Research Compliance**
**Human Studies Program**

| | |
|---|---|
| **TO:** | Barile, John, PhD, University of Hawaii at Manoa, Psychology<br>Pruitt, Anna, MA, University of Hawaii at Manoa, Psychology, Cohen, Shoshana, Psychology, University of Hawaii at Manoa |
| **FROM:** | Rivera, Victoria, Interim Dir, Ofc of Rsch Compliance, Social&Behav Exempt |
| **PROTOCOL TITLE:** | Local Media and Attitudes toward Homeless Persons and Policy in Honolulu |
| **FUNDING SOURCE:** | |
| **PROTOCOL NUMBER:** | 2018-00693 |
| | Approval Date: September 20, 2018 Expiration Date: December 31, 2999 |

**NOTICE OF APPROVAL FOR HUMAN RESEARCH**

This letter is your record of the Human Studies Program approval of this study as exempt.

On September 20, 2018, the University of Hawaii (UH) Human Studies Program approved this study as exempt from federal regulations pertaining to the protection of human research participants. The authority for the exemption applicable to your study is documented in the Code of Federal Regulations at 45 CFR 46.101(b) 2.

Exempt studies are subject to the ethical principles articulated in The Belmont Report, found at the OHRP Website www.hhs.gov/ohrp/humansubjects/guidance/belmont.html.

Exempt studies do not require regular continuing review by the Human Studies Program. However, if you propose to modify your study, you must receive approval from the Human Studies Program prior to implementing any changes. You can submit your proposed changes via email at uhirb@hawaii.edu. (The subject line should read: Exempt Study Modification.) The Human Studies Program may review the exempt status at that time and request an application for approval as non-exempt research.

In order to protect the confidentiality of research participants, we encourage you to destroy private information which can be linked to the identities of individuals as soon as it is reasonable to do so. Signed consent forms, as applicable to your study, should be maintained for at least the duration of your project.

This approval does not expire. However, please notify the Human Studies Program when your study is complete. Upon notification, we will close our files pertaining to your study.

If you have any questions relating to the protection of human research participants, please contact the Human Studies Program by phone at 956-5007 or

**1960 East-West Road**
**Biomedical Sciences Building B104**
**Honolulu, Hawai'I 96822**
**Telephone: (808) 956-5007**
**Fax: (808) 956-8683**
**An Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Institution**

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